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PULPIT DISCOURSES

EXPOSITORY AND PRACTICAL,

AND



COLLEGE ADDRESSES, &c.

BY

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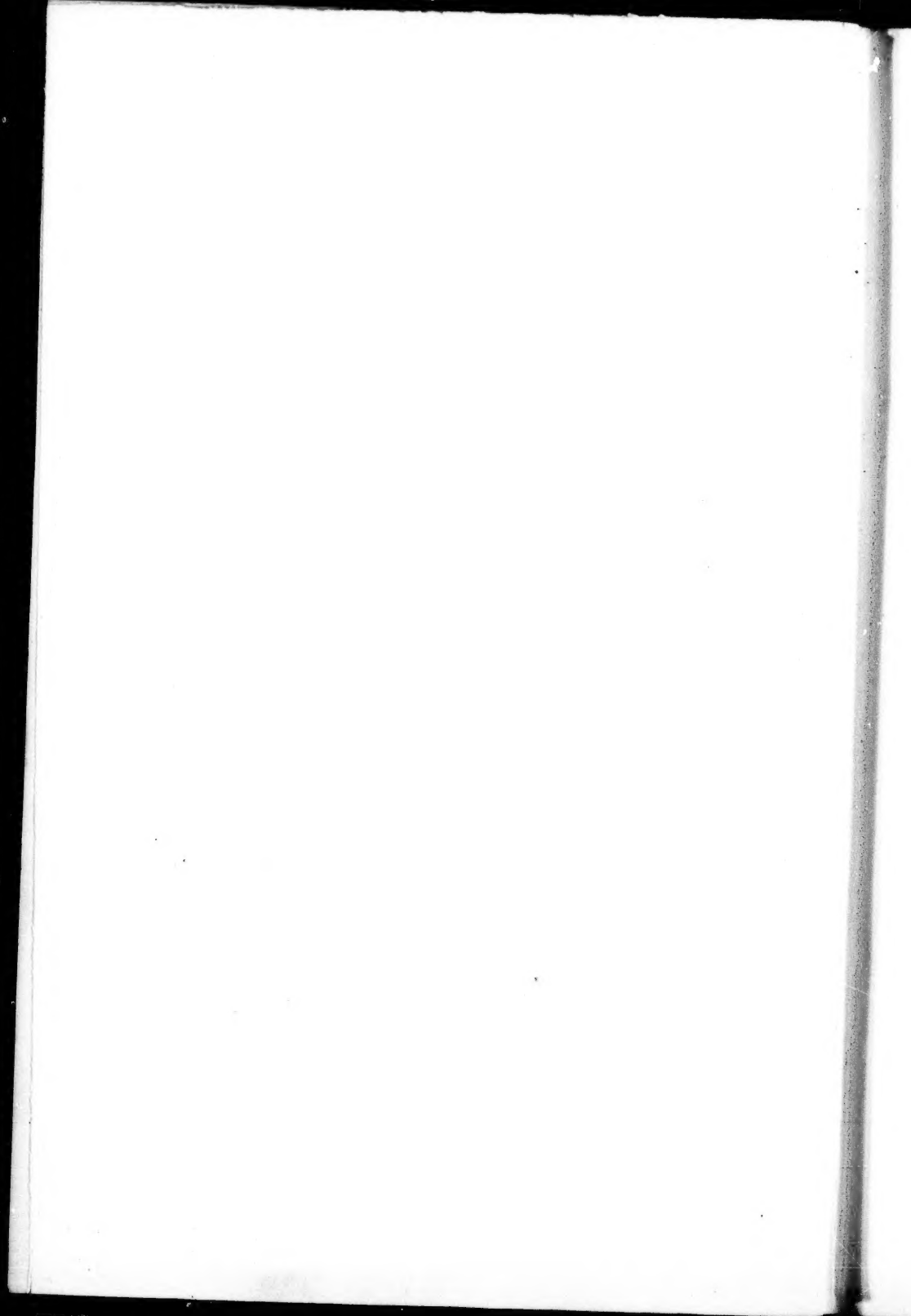
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PREFACE.

THE author of these discourses is not without reason for believing, that such a memorial of his labours will be acceptable to many respected friends in both hemispheres. Yet, he would hardly have allowed himself, on the ground alone of wishes kindly expressed, to venture either on the publication of those portions of the book never yet printed, or the republication of pieces already circulated in other forms, had he not thought that the volume so constituted as a whole might in some valuable degree subserve the cause of truth, and the edification of Christians.

To members, still surviving, of his affectionately remembered flock in Scotland, some of the Texts found here, and their illustrations, will recall Sabbaths and Sacraments long gone by—and precious in the pastor's remembrance as well as theirs.

Transatlantic parties, he is also assured, are prepared

to welcome from the press a selection from those fruits of his sacred studies, to which they did him the honour to listen with attention when delivered from Pulpit or Chair. Nor can he forget, any more than they, precious seasons of spiritual enjoyment, in visits to congregations up and down the country which he made in the intervals of College labours—supplying, on occasion, the bread of life to such as had as yet no pastors, or assisting pastors in the administration of word and ordinances.

Having been much among Students, their benefit has been largely in the author's view, as well in the pulpit discourses which bulk so largely in the volume, as in the college addresses proper. He submits them with some humble confidence as illustrations of rules which he was wont to insist upon. Not only would he show what he means by "preaching Christ," in connection with whatever special subject, but by preaching the "word."

He has long been an advocate for more doctrinal preaching than has been common, or a fuller presentation of the truths of systematic theology (not, however, using the term in its very technical sense), and the results of careful exegetical theology also; in other words, more frequent exhibition of the glorious truths of the Gospel in their own interesting relations to one

another, with clear expositions of the scriptural grounds on which the preacher rests his statements—all this of course with a practical view, and for the strengthening of appeals to the conscience and affections.

He believes it is according to the truest philosophy of the Art of preaching to expect moral effects in proportion as the unsearchable riches of Christ are set forth,—the Gospel being the power of God for sanctification as well as peace. Too often that instrument of power is weakly wielded, and the great truths of revealed religion either meagrely spoken out, but in hints and scraps—or taken for granted as if familiar to all, while the preacher hastens on to “the practical.” He believes that he who is most deeply alive to the value of the Gospel truth, and who knows experimentally its value to the spiritual life, will be the most urgent in setting forth the claims of the divine law also, yea, most minute in its exposition. It may often be observed that a meagre Gospel is accompanied with a superficial analysis of spiritual affections, and too vague or general—though oft and oft reiterated inculcation of the Christian ethics.

The author also—in connection with this—may be allowed (he will be excused, he hopes, if after fifty years’

service of Christ, he seems to speak in an authoritative tone) to recommend preaching from whole verses, or from various verses, as the basis of discourse. He does not mean only passages chosen for exposition in pulpit lectures—though these are of great utility—but when “texts” of sermons proper are, as too often they are, founded on detached clauses, he thinks the temptation is frequently yielded to, of indulging in wire-drawn, weary, illustrations, in which opinions and speculations of the man bulk far beyond the dictates of the “word” itself.

In this preference of a clause, as the motto of the essay, he has seen the context dismissed and the very associated clause, that at least might have been drawn upon for illustration, left untouched. Some students may remember the author’s reference to a discourse he once heard on 2 Peter iii. 18—“Grow in grace,” in which the clause beside it was forgotten or ignored. Another preacher on Eph. iv. 30, set off at once on an elaborate dissertation on sinners’ freedom of will and responsibility for rejecting the Gospel, without observing how it is primarily addressed to saints! The effect is that hearers have too sparingly dealt out to them, what comes home to the conscience and heart with authority. It was the “reasoning out of the Scriptures,” and the com-

paring of spiritual things with spiritual, with frequent direct reference to the "Thus saith the Lord,"—it was this in the hands of the apostles, and our reformers, that was attended with effects so blessed;—and it is this, he believes, that anywhere, will build up an intelligent piety, and a correspondingly high *morale*. Of course the book of creation to be drawn upon in fitting proportion, or nature in subordination to revelation.

When he recommends passages of some length for exposition, or texts of whole verses, or two or three verses even, in preference to little clauses torn from their context, he appreciates, not the less, concentration and *drift* in sermons; and the preacher of fair logical power should know how to combine variety with unity. As has just been suggested, much reference should be made to well-selected Scriptures in the very words of the Spirit, that poor souls may have something stronger to lean upon than either the modest but uncertain "I think," or the confident "I hold," of a fellow man.

The author should add, that—looking on this very much as a "Memorial" volume,—he has introduced into it several pieces neither coming under the head of pulpit discourses nor of college addresses. Speeches are repro-

duced here—delivered in Presbytery and Assembly,—referring however to errors, which still come often to the surface. These he gives nearly as found in the ordinary newspaper reports of the time: He thought it best to let them stand in their naturalness, in first person, or third person, as originally reported.

A like remark applies to one sermon—the second—which, after hesitation, he inserted. It was preached at Paris, in the absence of his manuscript, on brief warning.

He was surprised at the accuracy of the short-hand reporter; and he felt not unwilling to preserve it as a sort of specimen of the author's extemporaneous preaching. But the "extemporaneous"—when by this is meant unpremeditated—as this was not—finds with no one less favour than with the author: And let him take the opportunity of saying in the ear of students, that he is no friend to absolutely extempore public prayer either. He respectfully asks a perusal of his Letter on prayer in Appendix E.

Finally, the Author should perhaps apologise for inserting at the close of the volume, what is a public church document, but prepared by himself in his capacity of convener of a committee of Assembly. Though his main

PREFACE.

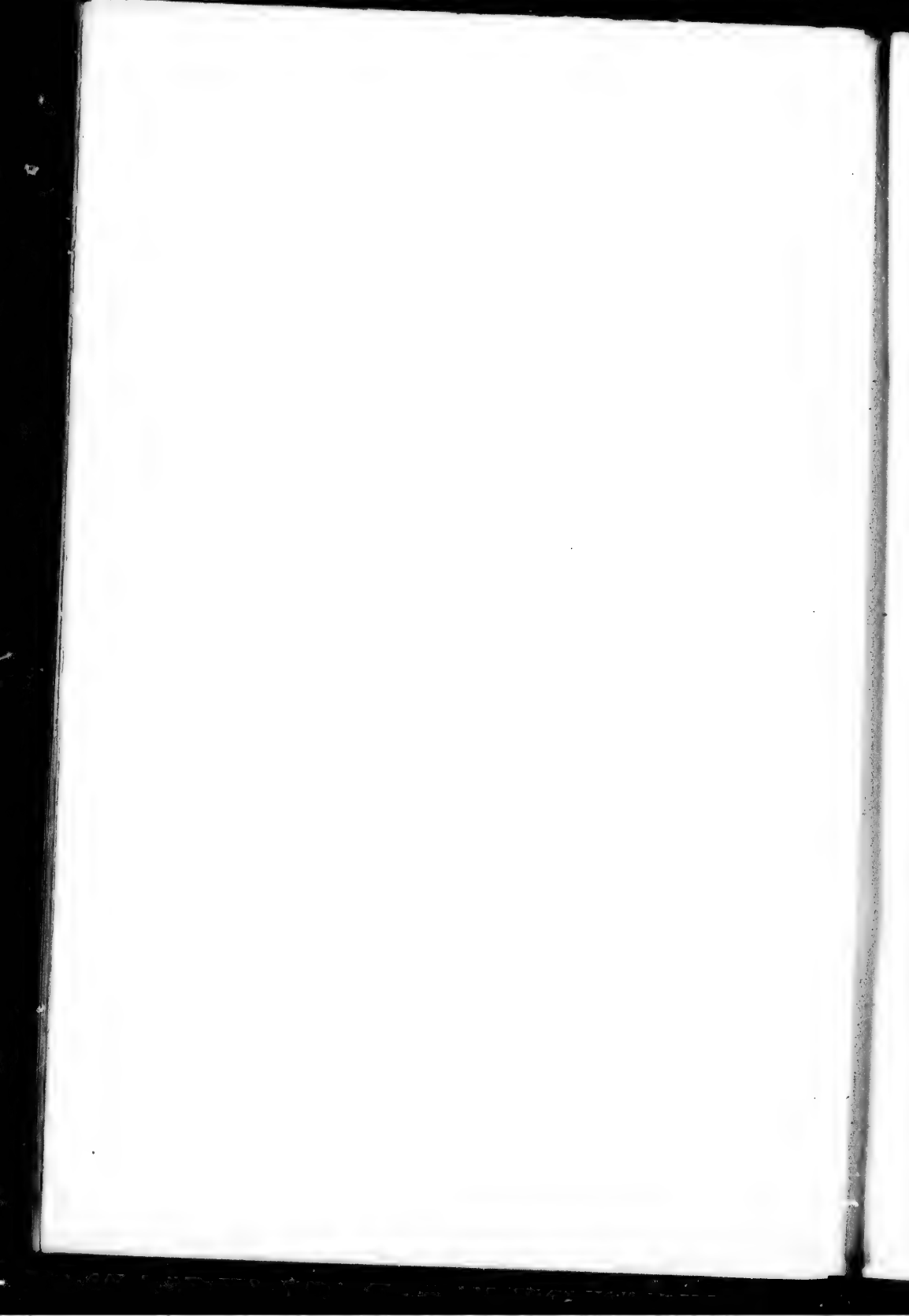
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argument for its insertion is the practical utility of the subject handled, he will not be hardly judged, if he owns to a certain pleasure in perpetuating—so long as this volume lives—the remembrance of the honour so generously accorded to him by the fathers and brethren of the Canada Presbyterian Church, few of whom he is likely to see in the face again; in their electing him the Moderator of their first General Assembly, notwithstanding his notice given of his wish to retire from the charge he had held among them, and return to the parent land, to spend there the evening of life. The document, though already circulated in pamphlet form, will thus be better preserved for use:—and at home here, it appeared, being so practical, no unsuitable accompaniment to the largely doctrinal and polemical materials of the book.

M. W.

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I.

THE PARABLE OF THE LABOURERS.

"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. . . . And so the last shall be first, and the first last : for many be called, but few chosen."—**MATT. xx. 1-16.**

THESE latter are solemn words : and as they close this discourse of our Lord, I may say they introduce it also ; for we find in the concluding verse of the immediately preceding chapter the same statement, or, "many that are first shall be last, and the last first,"—accompanied here with the affecting addition, "many be called, but few chosen."

It seems plain that this concluding aphorism affords the best key to the meaning of the whole passage, since it is our Saviour's own practical improvement of his discourse. The last clause fixing our attention on nominal in distinction from real members of Christ's Church, in terms applicable to all times indiscriminately ; and the accompanying clause distinguishing earlier and later economies and opportunities ; combine to warrant a two-fold reference

of the whole parable ; first, to the Jews and Gentiles comparatively ; secondly, to nominal and real Christians comparatively.

In the First view, our Lord is reproving self-righteous Israelites,—those “Jews outwardly” who boasted over other men on the ground of their long enjoyed national advantages, and who could scarcely persuade themselves that sinners of the Gentiles should inherit the kingdom of heaven, or, on equal terms with themselves, possess the blessings of the covenant made with their fathers. In the other view, the parable reproves the spirit of self-righteousness whether in Jew or Gentile, and exhibits the certain connection between faith in Christ and salvation, as well in the case of a late or unlikely penitent as of the earlier subject of grace. These two views of the parable resolve, it may be seen, into one ; or, under the former view, we have just a particular exemplification of what in the second is generalised. The Jew erred in erecting a fancied claim to exclusive or preferable rights on his earlier calling ; the self-righteous formalist—Gentile as well as Jew—errs in trusting in external observances, and pluming himself on their number or bulk rather than their kind. Such may be shut out from the kingdom, or be behind in entering it, as compared with many who surpass as far in the substance of religion as they come short in specious demonstrations ; later, perhaps, in starting in the spiritual race, yet keeping better to the appointed course ; labourers, hearty and sincere though not boasters, putting forward no works of their own as the price of eternal life, but thankfully as sinners submitting to the righteousness of God.

Attention to this design of our Lord at once removes two difficulties which some expositors have found in this passage; one in reconciling what is said of the labourers faring alike in the end of the day, with the numerous intimations elsewhere of a variety in the distribution of final rewards; the other that earlier debtors to grace should seem to grudge salvation to later: For that variety may consist with salvation being on one principle of grace, through the one meritorious righteousness of the Mediator; and so the passage, while asserting Divine Sovereignty in the choice of the vessels of mercy, in opposition to claims of human deserving, is quite in harmony with others,—for example, Luke xix. (parable of the servants entrusted with the money of their absent lord),—which assert proportionate rewards of greater or less diligence.

Again, as to the second difficulty; what seems strange, that persons called earlier by grace should here be found grudging the salvation of later converts, will be seen to be in harmony with what is the fact, that no really gracious persons do grudge at the extension of mercy to the chiefest sinners; since the concluding words explain that the murderers are formalists only,—the ‘called,’ not the ‘chosen.’—Such seeming but not real labourers under Christ, in pleading that they have borne the burden and heat of the day, and putting forward on the ground of this a claim to different treatment, just identify themselves with the Pharisee mentioned elsewhere who despised others; or with those whom Christ, in the house of Simon, spoke of as forgiven little, that is, having no adequate sense of their need of forgiveness, and so who love little.

How aptly do the various parts of this parable before us fit into the former of these applications! God, the great householder, going out early to hire labourers into His vineyard, first called the children of Abraham. By prophet after prophet, He addressed that people, rising up early and sending them. At length, He sent his Son, still to them first; for Christ's commission also was primarily to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Yet He was to be a light to the Gentiles as well. And strange that with so many intimations in ancient Scripture of a purpose of grace towards all nations, the Jewish people should have cherished prejudices so narrow and exclusive! It is true we see a primary regard to them avowed in the commission of the apostles also: "To you first, God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you," said Peter, in his sermon at Jerusalem at the Pentecostal time,—*"To you first."* But he reminds his Israelitish auditory, that, though *first*, they were not to be *alone* the children of the covenant.

Nay, the parable enunciates that the last were to be the first, or, as Christ puts it elsewhere, the kingdom of God was to be taken from them, and given to others bringing forth the fruits thereof. So it has been. It was, indeed, no small advantage the Jews possessed in being so long privileged with a Divine revelation and a pure worship, while others were enveloped in heathen darkness. "Of them were the covenants, and the service of God, and the promises." They were hired early, if we may so speak in the language of the parable; not, however, that even under the Sinai dispensation, man was ever warranted to believe

that eternal life was attainable by any sinner on the condition of his own works of righteousness. To buy or to earn the kingdom of God is alike impossible to Jew and to Gentile. It is not meant, therefore, by the householder engaging the labourers, whether at the earlier or the later hour, that any man since the days of Adam could justify himself by the law or covenant of works. The description in the parable, as if of a contract between master and servant, is an accommodation to ordinary customs as among men. But we may never forget that "eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." To Abraham the inheritance was by promise,—believed for, not earned. And it never was to Abraham's children, any more than to the Gentiles, held out as the meritorious reward of human righteousness. The promise early given was not made void by the law. The law entered that the offence might abound;—that man the sinner might feel the need of a Mediator, and be shut up to the faith. One way, and one way only, of salvation, was from the day of the fall possible to mankind. And so Israel, though professing to follow after the law of righteousness, did not attain to righteousness. Wherefore? The apostle answers (Rom. ix. 32), "Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone. But the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith."

It is not meant that all Israel was rejected; nor does the aphorism that the last shall be first imply that they were. There were multitudes among Israel according to the flesh who "obtained," though the rest were blinded.

Were they not men of Israel who lifted up their voices in grateful praises to God, because a door of faith was opened to the Gentiles? The murmurers, as we have suggested, include those only—too numerous, alas!—to whom the cross of Christ was an offence; who laboured at a work of righteousness in their own way, and bore the burden and heat of the day rather in a superstitious observance of external rites than in the reasonable services of a spiritual worship. These are justly reprovèd, in the end of the day, for their presumption and self-confidence. The grace to which every saved one must hold himself a debtor is represented as making no difference between one class and another; no difference, that is, in respect of the ground of justification, or way of access to God; no difference in respect of the adaptation of the provisions of grace to the needs of one and all. It was thus the apostle Peter asserted at the council of Jerusalem (Acts xv.) the equal warrant to receive the Gentile as the Jew into the fellowship of the Church: "God hath given to them"—the Gentiles—"the Holy Ghost, even as He gave unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." And so Paul also makes the last to be the first when he says (Gal. ii.), "We, who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

We have but to open the Book of the "Acts" to see how

literally the men of Israel fulfilled the prophecy, as it may be called, of this parable. Was it not when *they* contradicted and blasphemed, on occasion of the gospel being preached at Antioch by Paul and Barnabas, that these apostles thus boldly declared the counsel of God?—"It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation to the ends of the earth." Nor is the result less remarkable as noted by the sacred historian: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

II. We have said that our second interpretation of this passage is not essentially different from our first. It only recognises the general application of principles which have a primary but not exclusive illustration in the relative states of Jew and Gentile to God's dispensation of grace. In this second view of the passage, then, we make our practical application of it to the concerns of all in common. Now, we speak of the gospel as addressing itself to men of all ages and characters—to older and to younger—to lesser sinners and greater; and the parable in this view is still an assertion of God's right to do what He wills with His own. In this view, also, it needs to be explained that we are not to understand the engagement entered into with the labourers as warranting the idea that we may make

terms with God, or that we can now enter into life by a covenant of works. It does indeed teach that the Divine Master establishes a covenant with all whom He persuades to come into His service; that, whereas He might in absolute sovereignty command our obedience, He encourages us by promises. The parable, moreover, does teach that all men are called to labour for God, and that labour rightly done shall have its reward. Men are called under all dispensations to labour. This is their duty by the law of their creation: redemption only increases the reasons, and multiplies the encouragements of obedience. But it is the spirit of the parable, nevertheless, to teach us that we cannot by any amount of labour establish a title meritorious of life, or a ground of glorying before God. It is not on the principle of so much for so much, or 'do this and live," that God deals with us now. And so the labourer entering on his service at the eleventh hour just fares as does his fellow-servant who toiled from morning onward. The thing intended to be impressed on us is, that salvation is free as well as precious,—so out of reach of human merit to deserve, or human power to establish a right to it, that only they who, like the Gentiles, receive it by faith, receive it at all; that to be called early, or permitted to labour longer, is just so much greater privilege, and so much more enhances our debt of gratitude to grace; and, that under any circumstances whatever, it is only when coming in the spirit of debtors to mercy, absolute mercy, that we are in case to appreciate the infinite benefit: for so truly infinite is the benefit, that

it reduces to nothing all human distinctions on which any man might plead even a comparative right.

Accordingly, it has not been unusual to interpret the passage with reference to the different seasons of life, or to cases of early and late conversion. And this is a legitimate application of it, if we only beware again of supposing that our Saviour, because he disallows any difference in a certain view, affirms equality of advantage in every view. It does not follow, that, because the early convert and the late are alike debtors to grace, and are alike by faith justified, that therefore it matters not whether we come to Christ early, or defer to another season. The parable gives no encouragement whatever to such an idea; far less will the Scriptures permit us to entertain it. Early religion has great advantages—has special rewards, we may even say. It is not intended, by disallowing claims of comparative merit, to deny all distinctions, or to represent it as a matter of indifference, whether we seek the kingdom first and chiefly, or indolently procrastinate. Why; looking at this very passage, it may easily be seen that duty binds to immediate compliance with Christ's invitation. For, the householder goes out and seeks labourers at the third hour, and at the sixth; however he in sovereignty accepts at the eleventh. It is in the language of reproof that He asks, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Nor are we to understand the excuse, "No man hath hired us," as representing a plea which God will sustain. Such excuse, in the case of repentance delayed, rarely has a foundation in fact. Still, we take it, that, for the purposes of the parable, it is not necessary to distinguish between persons who have

only for the first time been plied with the gospel invitation, and those who have remained unimpressed under many messages. The attempt made by some writers, to show that this discourse of our Lord has nothing of encouragement for the death-bed penitent, appears to us to be as unjust to its design, as the inference that delay is safe would be unwarrantable. Of course, no encouragement is given here to count presumptuously on mercy at a future convenient season; but neither may we affirm that mercy may not be dispensed late,—yea, to him who has not been free from the guilt of presumptuous postponement of his suit for mercy, if at length brought truly to repent of this presumption also. For, if we insist that, in the parable, the labourers admitted at the eleventh hour could plead, "Because no man hath hired us," whereas the very late penitent has resisted, generally speaking, many calls; we allow, indeed, that this habit of resistance increases the difficulty and the improbability of conversion, humanly speaking; but, unless you maintain that any one act of resistance forecloses all hope to the convert of the third, or sixth, or ninth hour, we do not see how the distinction can from this passage be maintained as between the earlier and the later penitent; so far, we mean, as to warrant the judgment that grace may never be expected to take its trophies from the most desperate sinners; yea, from such as may have stood proof the longest against the calls of the gospel. For how few are there, among those received earlier in the day of life, who had not declined the invitation, and trifled with opportunities! The difference is only one of degree between such as have yielded compliance at the

sixth hour, and those who have presumed on God's long-suffering to the very eleventh. It is sovereign grace that effectually gains the submission of either. The grace that was needful for the one may prove to be sufficient for the other. Shall our eye be evil because God is good? May He not do what He wills with his own? We hold that it is in the very spirit of this passage to conceive of mercy being extended on some occasions—we do not affirm they are many—even to them who have stood all the day idle. The grace that “abounds” is not to be limited by our conceptions of probability, or of comparative right. The right belongs to none; only we insist that the rule of limitation rests on no consistent ground, which would exclude the case of the death-bed convert by the language of these latest called. If the dying man cannot allege, “I never have been invited,” is the man, who has been accepted in mid-time of his days, able to deny that he had resisted many a solicitation, from his youth onward? Salvation is of works to neither; and *his* prayer *may* be heard—though in the dying hour—who lifts his eye imploringly to the cross,—sincerely bewailing time misspent, and privileges misused!*

Not the less is it right to urge, and to keep repeating it, that no word here warrants any one to use the passage to the effect of delaying repentance. The rule of duty, it is to be insisted, is not what God may in sovereignty do, but what He has promised to do. He promises salvation to him who accepts salvation to-day: there is no promise to the procrastinator that he shall find acceptance to-mor-

* In a preface to Baxter's “Now or Never,” an eloquent writer appears to me to have carried his argument too far, in insisting on the distinction referred to above.

row. Admitted that a true faith will save at the latest,—who can be certain of a late opportunity? Alas! a great fallacy on this subject misleads many readers of this scripture. The “eleventh” hour is apt to be identified with advanced age only; whereas it is rather to be taken of the latest, or all but the latest, opportunity in any one’s day of life. But, if that day of life is of various dimensions, to some a long day, to some a briefer, is it not plain that in one case the eleventh hour will come sooner far than in another? Graves of all dimensions; tablets bearing record of demise at all seasons; crowd our cemeteries! The “eleventh hour” may be nearer to its striking with you, young man, than with the old man beside you! Moreover, as against the deceitful notion that we may warrantably postpone, because God is gracious, the preacher may well demand of you; What though you were certain of future opportunities? is it just to yourselves, is it just towards God, to delay repentance a single day, a single hour? Is it your only concern to be safe? Is it nothing whether God be glorified, and how the real end of life may be best answered? Does the Lord of the vineyard seek for labourers now; and may we remain idle during our pleasure? Supposing we were certain of final safety, are we contented to be saved as by fire? If you were sure He will receive the late returning one, and accept the tardy proffer of brief, alas too brief, service, is it right, is it wise, to have withheld resolutely the earlier service? Ah, what do we not lose in missing opportunities of knowing God betimes, of walking with Him, of enjoying Him! And may not a late repentance be one of difficulty; not impossible indeed with God, but

impossible with man? or, if possible, may it not be attended with painful regrets, for our having defrauded so long the revenue of the Divine praise, and having failed to accumulate those blessed experiences, which, as the proofs of grace and the earnestness of glory, might have rendered our entrance into the kingdom not only safe but "abundant?"

And this leads to one more important reflection, founded on a correct interpretation of the parable. Works, let us be assured, are not undervalued, though boasting is excluded. Nor is Christian labour without its rewards,—yea, its proportionate rewards; because salvation is alike of grace to all. The person who should insist, on the ground that each labourer received the same hire, that there is no variety in the distribution of final blessedness, no degrees of glory, will be at a loss to explain how, according to another passage, he who traded with his lord's pound, and made the same ten pounds, was constituted lord over ten cities; while he who made the pound five pounds, was made lord over five cities (Luke xix.) That there shall be a special and abundant harvest to him who sows abundantly, is rendered probable by the tenor of many passages. All we insist on is, that there is nothing in a right interpretation of our Lord's discourse here to conflict with the idea of a diversity. Yea; whatever may be true of final rewards, plain it is that a difference obtains in the rewards of grace now,—in those spiritual enjoyments, I mean, which are the present rewards of spiritual labour. Who can say that God is not more enjoyed on earth by some than by others? Are not some more honoured by the heavenly Master than others?

Are they not exalted above others in their opportunities of knowledge, of service, of blessedness in the fellowship of the one Saviour? Do they not vary in the degrees of their sanctified conformity to His image and will? It may be, then, that where all shall be satisfied when they awake, the joy and honour of one may exceed those of another; as on earth, so in heaven also. Let us not forget that the murmurers in the parable are they who are called, but not chosen; labourers for Christ in form or pretence only.* That their pretensions are disallowed, or faith preferred to works, the late penitent to the early professor, is doubtless because, (besides that a true faith lays hold of the only righteousness which justifies), faith is the real spring of all good works, or of the new obedience that is cordial and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. The last is first, not because it is alike pleasing to God that our works be many or be few; but, rather, because till we believe in Christ our good works lack reality—they are as none. It is faith which purifieth the heart; it is faith which worketh by love. It is not that the works late and few of a true believer equal, in the glory redounding to God, the abundant labours of another believer. But that the works of the chosen and called, being works of faith and love, out-measure those of the outwardly called only. These last, proceeding from no principle of love, and done to no end of glorifying the heavenly Master, amount but to the

* Some interpreters of the passage have felt a difficulty in this—that both classes of workers are represented as actually having been hired, and having fulfilled their task; but is this at all out of harmony with the style of our Lord's discourses elsewhere? Compare Matt. xiii. 12, with Luke viii. 18: "have" is there to "seem to have."

forced service of the slave:—mean, as being the fruit of terror, and abominable, as a mercenary compromise with the Divine law; the substitute of dross for gold; the works of man yet unreconciled for the blood that atoneth,—of man yet in the flesh for the doings of the new creature.

It is fitting, then, that we should conclude our improvement of this passage with asserting the duty of labouring for the Lord; only affectionately admonishing you as to the spirit in which the works assigned you are to be done. Christ seeks labourers; He calls us not to idle repose or inaction. "Labour," says he, "for the bread which endureth unto everlasting life." There is first the work, the business, of faith itself. "This," said Jesus, "is the work of God that ye believe in Him whom God hath sent." And there are the labours that follow on faith. These include not only the directly religious duties,—the offices of devotion by which the soul is kept in communion with the heavenly Father, and the spirit exercised unto godliness,—but the duties of justice and charity as well; nay, we may rank under the head of works done for Christ, the employment of our faculties in the business of our daily callings, the doing the duties of common life in all our relationships to the world as well as to the Church. Those very secular actions are hallowed which are done under the governing power of spiritual principle, with holy ends, and in observance of scripture rules and limitations. Such actions are not distinct from religion; they are a part of religion. We admire the reply of that pious judge who, being interrogated as to how he would prefer to be found occupied at his Lord's sudden coming, answered that he should not grudge

to be found employed doing justice on the bench. Yet it is only they who seek the kingdom of God first who can afford thus to speak; whose peace of mind rightly founded, and not gained without anxious earnestness, has left them free to mind, with the things that are of God, the things also that are of men. To such the service of Christ is perfect liberty. All labour is love, and the range of obedience is as extensive as the performance is cordial. Such a man does what he does in the name of the Lord Jesus; all in the spirit of a thank-offering. It is not rendered *for* life, but from life. Through the law he is dead to the law, that he may live unto God; dead to it as a covenant, that he may the more love it as a rule. Esteeming, as we have said, his most prolonged service in the light of enhanced privilege, he, instead of claiming justification more than others, only feels that he is beynd others a debtor. "Of Thine own have we given Thee," is the spirit in which he reviews his deeds and his sacrifices. And so, in the end of the day, at the last judgment, far from boasting of his works, he rather feels as one surprised and ashamed at the mention by his Lord and Saviour of his poor doings, and at the exalted estimate of them pronounced by Him who accounts what has been done to the least of His brethren as having been done to Himself (Matt. xxv.) †

II.

REST FOR THE WEARY.*

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—MATT. xi. 28.

THE passage which I read to you just now (Matt. xx.),† dear friends, speaks of labourers: this passage speaks of rest. The very announcement of the invitation falls pleasantly on one's ear. How sweet is rest after bodily toil; and how doubly pleasing is rest to the weary or overwrought spirit! No doubt, it is chiefly of spiritual rest that our Saviour here speaks—the healing of the soul; and what He promises is that boon which is alone fitted to satisfy the expectations of a rational and immortal being. "I will give you rest." From the connection it will also appear that He intends an immediate kind of rest, in contradistinction to that rest vainly sought, which men anticipate from their own laborious processes of self-justification, such as were common among the Jewish people. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me,—for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

It is worthy of notice how this invitation comes closely

* A sermon delivered in Paris, June 17, 1855. Taken down by a shorthand reporter.

† The passage in Matt. xx. had been read in connection with the devotional service.

after one of the most solemn assertions of the sovereignty of God to be found in all the Scriptures. We have seen that the householder demanded, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" Here Christ, lifting His eyes to heaven, uses language, not of submission simply, but of devout thankfulness and repose in the wisdom and faithfulness of God. He expresses His acknowledgment of the Divine sovereignty, believing it best that it should be in the Divine hands to give or to withhold: teaching that where finite beings—I do not speak of Christ, but of ordinary men—may see difficulties and discrepancies in the distribution of God's blessings, they may repose in the belief, after Christ's example, that all is rightly done: "Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent;" that is, those who imagined themselves such, who were wise in their own wisdom, following their own light; "and hast revealed them unto babes,"—simple ones, as compared with these. "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." But, that we may know that no sovereignty on God's part is at all at variance with our immediate duty, and privilege, of accepting the common salvation which is proffered to us in the most unrestricted terms, He adds this word of encouragement, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Let me say a few words, as it may please God, on four points which may be observed here. First, The party thus addressing us, "Come unto me." Secondly, The parties addressed as "labouring and heavy laden." Thirdly, The "rest" promised. And fourthly, The duty enjoined,—What is it?

I. I need not say who it is that speaks to us. It is the Son of Man, but it is also the Son of God. It is He who declares in the previous verse, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." It is He who says, in virtue of His dominion over all things, speaking now especially as delegated by the Father who sent Him, and as having committed to Him the distribution of the blessings which He has himself purchased: "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." We need not, therefore, doubt our right to accept the blessings which are proffered to us by Him who was sent for the very purpose of announcing them, of intimating the will of God to bestow them; and who died to obtain them for us and to make them sure. We always like to know the power of a person to accomplish his promise, if any good is offered. Christ here opens His commission. He tells us of His power and authority as the dispenser of heavenly blessings, while He says in the language of mercy and love, 'Come unto me.'

II. Who, then, are the persons invited? Indeed, my friends, who are they not? The terms are comprehensive of all: all sinners, all sufferers. Sometimes they have been interpreted as applicable—and so indeed they are, but not exclusively—to persons who have been awakened by the terrors of the law to a sense of guilt; who are convinced of their sinful and miserable condition. I have seen a sermon on this text by a Scottish writer, who regards it in that light, as an invitation addressed to con-

vinced sinners. Indeed, it suits them very well; and if there be any of you under a conviction of sin, and asking how you can get rest, it suits you. But if there be any among you hard-hearted and far from righteousness, it suits you no less. Have you not a burden? Does it follow that a man is not burdened,—I mean in the moral and spiritual sense,—because, by the habit of sin, by insensibility, or by some erroneous views of his relation to God, he is not aware of his danger? Oh! is it not burden enough to be far from God? Are we not heavily laden if we are still under God's unmitigated displeasure? If, for anything we have yet done or sought according to God's prescribed method, we are exposed to the danger of eternal perdition, can we say we are not heavy laden? There may be such persons who are labouring, but labouring in vain; trying to make peace with God, but acting on a wrong principle. How many in this interesting and far-famed city are labouring in their own way to obtain peace with their Maker—obeying the precepts of the priesthood, but not knowing whether to go right or left, not knowing what the result will be—whether the work will be finished in this life, or in some fancied purgatory hereafter! There is labour, not small, I trow, labour willingly undertaken in some cases, though fruitless of present comfort. For nothing is more characteristic of a superstitious service, than a want of peace, a want of rest, and confidence towards God; religion is not regarded as a cheerful service; there is no joy with it. There may, indeed, sometimes be a hope built upon mere superstitious observances, but we may well doubt its genuineness. How can it be genuine

where there is no real faith in the Son of God? Such faith may, I dare say, sometimes exist, mixed with superstition; I do not suppose there are no real Christians amongst those devoted to a superstitious and ceremonial worship; but where there is nothing else but a reliance upon the result of labour—so much for so much—there can be no real rest for the soul. I remember hearing of a person who, like some of us, was travelling on the Continent, I believe in Italy, and he met with an old woman who was worshipping devoutly in some temple; he observed that she was very attentive to her duty morning and night, and he asked her whether she found repose, and was sure of salvation. She simply shook her head and said, "No!" She had nothing that she could call peace; and I believe that this is the true description of the state of mind of thousands of those who labour most sedulously according to prescriptions of human ritual, but in deviation from the simple letter of God's blessed word. I say all are labouring and heavy laden, although complying with the forms of religion, who are under the burden of sin and of God's displeasure; not reconciled to Him, not at peace with Him, not possessing that blessed hope which comes from faith—the faith which unites us to the Son of God.

III. This brings me to the third point: What is this rest? "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is not a rest which means inaction. You remember what we read about the labourers. Christ's design in bringing us into His vine-

yard, and making us labourers, is not to put us to sleep, not to suffer us to live in inaction, not to make us suppose that because the work was wrought for us by another, there is therefore nothing to be done by us. No; grace, as the hymn we have been singing shows us, only lays us under a greater obligation to work, seeing that we are redeemed with a price and are not our own. The angels of heaven are active beyond all creatures on earth. These, who have no sin adhering to them, have the highest rest; but that rest lies, in part, in their harmony with the Divine will, and their consciousness of active employment in accomplishing the high behests of their Creator. So is it with the saints too. Their repose is not indolence, but it is peace—such a peace, such a happiness as inspires action, and stimulates new obedience. I have no doubt that that is a part of our Saviour's meaning in the passage which I have formerly explained, "Many that are last shall be first, and the first last." That is, persons who have come simply to acknowledge the truth by faith in Christ, relinquishing all earthly reliance, will be more abundant in work, will labour more for God, and in that respect be first; while he shall be last who stands on ceremonies, counts upon them, and finds some way of relieving his conscience by substituting forms for substance.

How fine a commentary upon this have we in that parable spoken in the house of Simon! Christ was at table there, and you will remember how He supposed the case of a creditor having two debtors, one owing him fifty pence, and the other five hundred: and He asked Simon, if both were forgiven, which would love most? Simon

replied, "I suppose he to whom much was forgiven;" and he answered rightly. Then Christ described the state of forgiven sinners, as abounding in good works, obedience, affection, gratitude and penitence; comparing them with this Pharisee's demeanour, who, counting himself righteous, had denied Him almost all the common courtesies of life.

But this rest begins in the possession of confidence towards God. Of course, therefore, it supposes a ground of confidence, and that a better one than anything which the imperfect works of sinful creatures can supply. In other words, this rest begins in the belief of forgiveness; in the acceptance of the offer of redemption through the blood of Christ; in the apprehension of that righteousness which makes a sinner just: for the Gospel tells us not only of forgiveness, but of a righteousness brought nigh and proffered to us, which we may plead before God as if it were our own; as if we had properly kept the law in our own persons, and kept it to the highest of God's requirements. That righteousness is available for every man who believes in Christ. Thus the forgiven sinner, having redemption through the blood of Christ, may have peace and rest, in the sense of feeling a ground of confidence towards God, which all the creature doings of a long life could never bestow. It is a ground of security better than Adam had. In his state of innocence and happiness in Eden, he possessed indeed the favour of God and communion with God, but he was not sure of its everlasting duration, and his righteousness, so to speak, was not yet perfect; he possessed inherent righteousness, but not that

which should establish his claim to everlasting life, till he had fulfilled the terms of the covenant he was put under. But the man who comes to Christ now is united by his faith to the second Adam, to one who has perfected his probation, who has gained the title to eternal life, who has fulfilled all the terms; and therefore the righteousness of Christ, divinely excellent as it is, comes now to every poor believing penitent, as his ground of hope and confidence as to his possession of the favour of God.

But rest does not lie entirely in that. As I have said, God does not call us to live in inaction. I have no hesitation in adding, that this rest consists very much in our sanctification, not simply in what may be called our change of nature, the communication to us of a right bias towards what is good; but it lies very much in the exercise of the graces conferred upon us. Such is the relation of a rational being to the Creator, that the more the creature is exercised in doing the will of the Creator, the greater will be his happiness and repose. The rest of the saints in heaven is, indeed, perfect; yet, in sense, "they rest not"—that is the language of Scripture. Strange, yet true! They have perfect rest, but "rest not;" that is, they never cease from the praise and service, we know not in what way, of Him who has sanctified them, perfected them, and made them His own. That perfection very much consists in disposing them to love and serve God, and to feel their happiness lying in that very employment. God is the centre to which every rational being must turn—on which he must depend. *He* is just like an orb of heaven, eccentric, and away from its proper sphere, and will be as irregu-

lar in his movements, who has not his centre in God—who is not revolving in that sphere, with constant reference to the author of his being, and the source of his blessedness. The Christian religion brings man into this position; communicates this new nature,—makes God the object of our supreme affections, as well as of our confidence.

I will add another thing regarding this rest—Man, the rational being, the active creature, made for intellectual exercise, continually seeks after something beyond that which has been found. Men busy themselves in the arts of life; in the walks of industry, of commercial enterprise; or in feats of arms. Man must have that which occupies his spirit, keeps his mind in action, and supplies to him a point of ambition, and of onward progress. All men are in search of some boon, and, whatever they acquire, they are still in search. It is the Christian alone who has found the infinite, the all sufficient, the inexhaustible boon. Religion, while it calls us off from a love of the world, and raises us to a superiority over the present scenes of earth, mere objects of sense, does not so spiritualise us as to isolate us from all that is material. Instead of a Christian ceasing to have anything which can be called earthly happiness, I maintain that all his earthly happiness is doubled. Even the poor man's loaf of bread and cup of water are sweetened, by being enjoyed in the favour of God. Everything in the world, every object of sight, the very heavens above us, the sun that illumines the horizon, the grass that grows in the fields, the waters that enrich the meadows, the finny tribe that skims in the waters; every object of scientific investi-

gation, in earth and sky ; ministers a doubly refined pleasure to the mind that devoutly recognises God in all. Just as an author* has said, that a Christian may be at ease in poverty or wealth, for in the abundance of all things, he has God in all, or, in the absence of all things, he has all in God. That is, that in the abundance of earthly things, supposing him to be prosperous, his prosperity is enhanced, because he enjoys God in all; and in the other case, in the absence of all things, he has all in God.

IV. What, now, is coming to Christ? for everything hinges on this. This is evidently another expression for believing, earnest application to Him, and accepting Him—just as faith is sometimes described in the Bible to be. Too much may be made of definitions of faith; and some have complained that ministers and theologians give too many definitions and descriptions of it. A great many definitions are no doubt perplexing; but there is no subject better worthy of diligent discrimination, and there is nothing more frequent than the substitution of a wrong faith for a true one. Why then should not men try to analyse it? Precious faith, the faith of God's elect, that works by love; is it such a small affair, that, while men will search after all other knowledge, they will not try to distinguish between the true and the spurious here? The Bible itself defines faith; and surely that is not unworthy of our study which it employs terms so various to describe. "To as many as received Christ,"—that is, more than

* Serle.

simply entertaining a general opinion about Him, believing a narrative concerning Him, with something of an hereditary formal belief: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Our Saviour takes pains to express what this is, which some people find it so easy to understand, or think it absurd to define. He says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." (John vii. 37.) He tells us that He is as water to quench thirst, that He is the bread of heaven, and that we must so believe in Him, that we must drink this water, eat this spiritual food, and digest it, if we would receive Him. By this variety of figure and illustration, He condescends to explain the thing, that we may not rest in a mere general belief. Simon Magus had that kind of belief: he was a prompt believer in a certain sense; but he was a child of Satan at that moment. My dear friends, we must not rest in simple historical belief, a mental entertainment of the message concerning Christ, though that is very precious and valuable, and nothing good can be got without it. We must not rest in a mere intellectual assent; we must commit our souls to Christ, we must come to Him, we must rest upon Him, we must welcome Him to perform in us all that belongs to His office as a Saviour, not only as having died for us, but as now teaching us by His word and Spirit, that He may reign over us and make us wholly His. That is the faith which gives life. "I live by the faith of the Son of God," says Paul; and Peter declares that God sees it important to try this precious faith, and that the trial of it, even by suffering, is

more precious than the trial of gold. Therefore, my friends, let us see that we come to Christ, spiritually and effectually. There are a great many persons in the world who, when they hear the Bible spoken against would, no doubt, speak a word for it; others would go a greater length, and not only speak well of the Bible, but go regularly to worship, and keep up the custom of going to the Lord's table so many times a year; and they have been baptized too. Well; that is something of a credible faith in the case of those who understand and approve of what they have been taught; but still it may not be saving faith. We may come to the Bible, come to church, and to the sacramental table, and not, after all, have come to Christ. What does He say? He does not say, Come to the Bible, though He invites us to "search the Scriptures," but He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." A celebrated English writer, when cautioning Christians against resting in the mere form of a sacrament, makes the remark that "sacraments are very valuable ordinances, but their value lies in their being means of knitting to Christ, helps to communion with Him."

In fine, let me make a practical remark or two for the improvement of all. I have spoken of the party who invites, of the parties invited, of the blessing promised, and of the invitation, "Come." Now the question occurs, How is it that Christ has promised rest, and that there should be so great a defect in the real experience of this blessing on the part of Christians; that there should be so little known of what is true, solid, rest and repose? In the first place,

are we sure of this? I believe it is the case, though it is not for us to pronounce how many or how few have not repose. The thing is here promised; let us solve the question, whence it is that Christians, who really believe in Christ, and in the Bible, and go regularly to the worship of God, have not, many of them at least, real peace; and that many who have something of peace, so far from possessing assurance, deprecate almost as presumption the idea of trying to acquire it. Why should it be so? If peace comes by believing, it may be that the fault lies in our defective exercise of faith. We have taken the Saviour perhaps by halves; we are pleased enough to believe Him as a prophet, to rely on Him as a priest, and glad to think of His atonement; but, perhaps, we have not recognised Him as a master. To regard Christ as our Priest is indeed our first source of happiness and comfort, by the quieting of the conscience; but, for full salvation and peace, we must have Christ wholly, and as He must be wholly ours, so we must be wholly His. There is one thing,—with reverence be it said!—that the Almighty Himself cannot do; and it is no proof of His weakness, but rather of His perfection, that He cannot do it. The omnipotent God cannot make a sinner happy until he give up his sin; He might as easily cease to be God, as to make a creature happy who lives habitually in sin and in the love of it. This may be the cause of the want of peace with many who profess the gospel; not that they are living in utter licentiousness, or gross sin, but there may be an allowance, to some extent, of sin, there may be an omission of known

duty, there may be an habitual trifling with something which conscience tells us we should give attention to ; and in proportion as this is the case, peace will be wanting. Christ bids us "take my yoke upon you ;" and does He not repeat the promise, "Ye shall find rest unto your souls?"—as if reminding us that we are never to expect to enjoy the fulness of repose unless we are, in a measure at least, sanctified ; unless, though not perfect, we press after perfection, in obedience to the Lord's commandments, and as bearing His yoke? Christ is indeed made to us "wisdom and righteousness," but "sanctification and redemption."

Another reason, I fear, may be given why Christians have not all the peace they might expect ; it is that they are not taking God, in the sense we have explained, as their chief good. Their minds are too much in the world. This, with many sincere Christians, is one of the great hinderances to the progress of religion, and to the realisation of a full peace. We cannot love God, and love the world, the Bible tells us ; that is, in the sense of being equally under the one and under the other. The man who, on the whole, has his heart on God's side, may be following the multitude, if not in what is evil, yet in what is doubtful, what is unfavourable to the cultivation of piety in personal intercourse, in the family circle, in society in general ; and the consequence may be a diminution of peace ; because the effect of righteousness is peace, and the nearer there is actual conformity with God, the more will peace abound. "If I regard iniquity in my

heart, the Lord will not hear me," says David. Christ says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and I will love him, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Never, indeed, let us put one passage against another. This does not teach that our love to Christ is always the first thing before God's love to us; far from it, God's love is truly first, only Christ tells us that the more we manifest our love and gratitude to Him, and the more we walk in His commandments, the more will He visit us with the tokens of His love, the manifestations of His Spirit, and with all that contributes to a full and solid joy, and assurance of our saving interest in Him.

I would further say, that as peace is found by coming to Christ, so the continuance of peace is to be found by a continual coming to Him. One cause that may be assigned for the want of assurance, is, that Christians having got a good deal of contentment, even spiritual contentment, having some reasonable hope of salvation, may be too easily satisfied with the knowledge which they have, instead of pressing on, not counting themselves to have attained, as already perfect, but striving for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. While the invitation, as I have said, is addressed to all sinners and sufferers, we may include among them Christians themselves. They are still "labouring and heavy laden," in some particulars; not indeed in the same sense as the unconverted; they are not under the wrath of God: but if a Christian is burdened with contentions on the side of unbelief, and an evil heart

as against his better nature, with the temptations and onsets of the devil, with the pressure of earthly cares, and even of lawful pursuits; to all such Christ says, to the saint as well as the sinner, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." To His name be everlasting praise! Amen.

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III.

CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN, AND HIS BAPTISM.

'And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.'—Acts viii. 26.

THIS passage of Scripture relates to an interesting event in the early history of Christianity. It belongs to a transition period of the Church, when the gospel was now going forth, under a more extensive commission than heretofore, beyond the circle of Judea, or the narrow range of the Israelitish people.

By an over-ruling providence, the persecution that arose about Stephen gave occasion for the word of the Lord having freer course. Accordingly; in the preceding context, we read of Philip going down to the city of Samaria, and preaching Christ there, not without great spiritual effects. It is related also that Peter and John went down to that region, and having preached the word in many villages, returned to Jerusalem.

It appears to have been under a special heavenly direction, that these early messengers of the gospel chose their fields of labour, whether in visiting districts and communities of men, or in seeking out particular individuals. We see that the Spirit of God concerned Himself in arrang-

ing the means tending to the gracious ends designed; and we may observe the hand of God in bringing together the various opportune occasions and agencies, beyond what any mere human foresight could have calculated upon. Thus, the Spirit of God directs Philip to go toward the south, on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. He obeys; and lo! an illustrious stranger, of much authority in the country to which he belonged—Ethiopia, approaches, pursuing his journey towards his home. He would appear to have been a proselyte to the Jewish religion, who had come so far as to Jerusalem to worship. He seems to have been in a measure instructed in the Old Testament Scriptures, though not yet established in the faith of Christ. It is remarkable that he was in the act of reading a part of Isaiah's prophecy, which speaks in very affecting terms of the suffering Messiah, at the moment when the evangelist by a Divine impulse is directed to approach him, and to proffer his assistance as an interpreter. It was in no obtrusive manner, we may be sure, that Philip accosted him and inquired, 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' And it was no doubt under the guidance of the same Spirit who marked out this duty to the teacher, that the catechumen so promptly welcomed his aid. Modestly confessing his need of instruction, he invites Philip to sit with him, and receives from the evangelist a solution of his difficulties.

We are not to understand the Ethiopian's words here, though amiably expressive of his consciousness of ignorance, as if implying the absolute necessity of human interpreters; far less as justifying the monstrous doctrine that a right of private interpretation does not belong to

each individual reader of Scripture. Supposing this man not to have met with Philip, who shall say, that, by the blessing of God on his own diligent search, he might not have attained to the understanding of that very passage which was now the subject of his anxious thought? But, God is pleased to honour the preaching as well as the reading of His word, especially the exposition of that word by those whom He has qualified and appointed. So, the evangelist improves the opportunity "to preach Christ;" for, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. It is said, "he began at the same scripture," not limiting himself to this passage, but comparing it with others, "and preached unto him Jesus." The confession made anon by his interesting disciple shows that the teacher had wisely explained one part of the sacred scripture by another; had connected the testimonies to the man Jesus with the testimonies to the God-man. For, one could not, from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah alone, demonstrate the divinity of the Saviour, marvellously explicit as that chapter is on the character and work of Christ, on the variety of his sufferings, the meekness of his demeanour under persecution from men, and his unresisting surrender of Himself as the victim of sacrifice at the altar of God. But, the evangelist had not far to seek, in the very same book of prophecy, for evidence that the Man of sorrows was Immanuel, God with us; that, though springing up as a tender branch, without form or comeliness, this "child born" was, not the less, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Or, if, beginning at the same scripture, he referred his ingenuous inquirer to other prophets, he could show, from

Daniel,—that one like the Ancient of days was the Messiah “to be cut off, but not for himself;” that Isaiah’s lamb led to the slaughter was also Jeremiah’s King of righteousness, yea, “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS;” or, in the words of another prophet still, “The shepherd smitten was Jehovah’s fellow.” (Zech. xiii.)

We are informed what were the very verses in Isaiah which the Ethiopian desired light upon. The place of the scripture which he read was this, “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter:” . . . “In his humiliation his judgment was taken away.” There is a variation, it may be observed, in these words, as quoted from the Greek version, compared with the words in our Old Testament, which read thus, “He was taken from prison and from judgment.” We can easily understand that the Greek or Septuagint Bible was likely to be more familiar to a native of Ethiopia, a country near to Egypt, whence the Greek version emanated. It might seem doubtful whether the verse refers more to the humiliation or exaltation of Christ. Probably it is to the former rather, or to the violence and wrong to which in his humiliation Christ was subjected; for the expressions following naturally apply to His humbled state—‘Who shall declare his generation?’ as if, Who can describe the wickedness of the men of that age? Some, indeed, think the question rather refers to the triumph of Christ’s cause, or to the innumerable spiritual race, of which He should be the head—an idea enlarged upon in the sequel, and often occurring elsewhere in the descriptions of the Messiah’s glory. At any rate, whatever obscurity may rest on this one clause, the testimony to the Messiah by the pas-

sage as a whole is so clear, that it may seem strange that a proselyte to the Jewish religion, returning from the city where our Lord had been solately crucified, should need to learn of whom the prophet spake. But, if we remember how blinded by prejudice were the Jews themselves, we may less wonder at a stranger from afar requiring to be instructed. It is possible that, among those into whose society he was thrown while at Jerusalem, the subject may have been little mentioned, or may studiously have been kept from him. See, however, the effect of Divine teaching in the speedy surrender of the mind of the inquirer to the truth as now set before him ! It was an effect worthy of so manifest an interposition of Heaven. Not surely to the power of mere human persuasion are we to ascribe the result, but to the sovereign and effectual grace of God. Yet, as usually, grace operated in connection with appointed means, not without them. The Spirit could as easily have communicated the knowledge directly by revelation, as moved Philip to approach the traveller, or the traveller to invite the evangelist's aid. But, not by angels, but by men of like passions with others, does He bring the message near to their fellow-men. We may conceive the earnestness with which the evangelist pressed on the attention of the inquirer a subject of such momentous interest : not expounding only the meaning of his text, how he would expatiate on the love of God that provided the Saviour ; on the marvellous wisdom as well as goodness of the plan of mercy ; on the necessity of Christ's obedience and death to the fulfilment of the wondrous design ; on the blessed hopes unfolded by His resurrection as well as

death; on the resulting benefits, in the justification now, and the glorification hereafter, of all who savingly know God's righteous servant! Withal, as appears from the sequel, he doubtless informed his catechumen of the duty of confessing Christ, and proclaiming His salvation to others. Hence the request of the convert as here narrated. It is that he may be allowed to profess his faith in the Saviour by baptism, and that he should thus be enrolled among the number of the avowed and pledged followers of the Lamb.

So we read (ver. 36), "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."

Their respective parts in this brief colloquy are alike honourable to the disciple and to his instructor. The evangelist, in the spirit that becomes every shepherd of Christ's flock, rejoicingly meets the very first indication of a wish so honourable as that of confessing Christ. And his catechumen, at the same time, is not in haste, though he speedily recognises the duty of joining himself to the visible Church. He was not like those who indolently say, 'It is enough to have the good feeling in the heart; or, If we know Christ, what signifies it whether we be known to His church or not?' No; enough that it is Christ's command not only to believe with the heart, but with the mouth to make confession: "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them." The administrator of Christ's ordinance omits not to charge the inquirer's conscience faithfully as well as

affectionately. Believing first, confession also: nor is it every kind of believing that suffices; "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." Just as Paul states the matter: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "I believe," said the eunuch, "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." No man can thus heartily confess Christ, we are assured, but by the Holy Ghost. Yet, no doubt, one may, without this, believe and confess after a sort. Simon Magus believed and wondered. The very devils believe that Jesus is the Son of God. It was not the expression of simple assent, the confession recorded here; but the joyful acquiescence, after careful inquiry, in a glorious truth,—a truth which stirred his soul to its depths! It was an appropriating faith, the effect indeed of outward teaching,—for faith cometh by hearing,—but withal of a spiritual, internal manifestation,—an almighty energy working with the word, and commending the truth with resistless power to the conscience: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shining into the heart, giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The effect of such a manifestation may be very speedy, as in the case before us. In other instances, it may be more gradual. But, in all cases, a willingness to follow Christ is the consequence, and, as here, a desire to confess Him.

It is fitted to show the importance of the article of Christ's Godhead, that, in this short confession of the Ethiopian convert, it stands so prominent; stands, indeed, in the room of everything else. This is the more remark-

able since, as we have said, the doctrine here confessed is not taught, directly at least, in the passage of Scripture which was more immediately the subject of discourse. Once seen, however, the preciousness of the doctrine of Christ's Godhead commends itself to the heart. Let the soul be but once awakened to feel its sins, once enlightened to know the purity of God's holy law; then it sees, indeed, that He needed to be more than one born of woman, though not despising the virgin's womb, who was to destroy the serpent's power, and tread the wine-press of Jehovah's anger. It is felt, that no arm of flesh could avert the flaming sword which barred the sinner's approach to the tree of life; no blood of creature can purify the conscience from dead works! "Who is he that overcometh, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

It is a brief creed this, which was put by Philip to his disciple.* It does not follow, however, that no other article of confession is to be a condition of recognised communion with a Church. This may be but a specimen of what the eunuch was called to profess. At any rate, as a believer in the prophets already, this was the main test to be insisted on with a Jewish convert or a proselyte of righteousness. But, the very fact that, in defining the objects of faith, the apostles use a variety of phraseology, and do not always limit themselves to this one article of belief, warrants the exacting of other conditions of admission to the sealing ordinances of Christ's house. The multifarious shapes

* The absence of the verse from such manuscripts as the Vatican, Alexandrine, and Sinaitic, is startling. But we have seen no satisfactory explanation on the prevailing hypothesis, for the text of so many of the early fathers agreeing substantially with our authorised version.

which the spirit of error has assumed since that early day have necessitated, on the part of the Church, more detailed statements of doctrine. But, in the case of one like the Ethiopian convert, who believed the Jewish Scriptures, this was the present truth to be owned: I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah; I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. These two articles are embraced in this one formula. Some have confounded the Messiahship of Jesus with his Sonship: they are not identical. It may be observed that Jesus Christ is the subject of the proposition: the thing emphatically predicated is, that He is "the Son of God."

Philip complies with the eunuch's desire; "They went down into" (or "to") "the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

With a few remarks on the circumstances of this administration of a sacramental ordinance, we conclude our exposition of the passage. The narrative shows impressively the relation in which faith and a profession of faith stand to the sacraments.

First, The circumstance that the baptized party was interrogated as to his faith, and such a faith with all the heart as doubtless implies regeneration, demonstrates that baptism was not viewed by the apostles as the means of regeneration, or an essential condition of it. The spiritual change was a fact already; the union with Christ—if a true faith is the bond of union—already existed. Baptism was the sign and seal, rather than the means, of this spiritual engrafting. It was the external token of admission to the church, and visible form of the acceptance of the

covenant. So, in the house of Cornelius afterwards, upon the Gentiles came the gift of the Holy Ghost, with the word alone,—with the preaching of the gospel by Peter. It waited not for the baptism; the baptism waited for it. "Can any man forbid water (said the apostle) that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

2. The confession was required before baptism; being the case of an adult person. It does not follow that baptism may not be dispensed to infants,—though incapable personally of confessing,—on the confession of the believing parents. Nothing is more natural than that we should read more explicitly of the conditions laid down in the case of grown persons; the gospel in the first instance addressed itself to such. We have the formula, "He that believeth shall be baptized," or, "Repent, and be baptized." But, in the very same way, the necessity of faith to salvation is asserted in the formula, "He that believeth shall be saved,"—as if the sacred writers were thinking of adult persons alone. Now, just as they did not mean by the one formula to exclude infants from salvation, though incapable of actually or personally believing; so, neither does the condition of confession expressed in the other formularies applicable to adults, decide against child baptism. Salvation might come to the *house* of a believer; children receiving the blessing in connection with the faith and prayers of parents, previous to their own capability of faith and prayer: and it is but in keeping with this, a thing most congruous, that the sign and seal should not be withheld, simply because of that incapacity. Nor is it more

surprising that the special warrant for infant baptism should not be set forth in so many words, than that the special manner of infant salvation is not set forth. The saving change can be effected by the operation of the Holy Ghost, anterior to any power of believing. "He that believeth shall be saved" is the rule; yet the kingdom of heaven is largely of those who knew not to believe. So the general rule was and is, He that believed and confessed was to be baptized; but not to the prejudice of the interest of infant children in the covenant. Indeed, the absence of any positive command to baptize the tender offspring of believing parents may be ascribed to its being the recognised and undoubted privilege of the child, according to all previous associations, to receive the seal of the covenant, and to be counted among the constituency of the Church. Rather it was to be expected that, if the time-hallowed privilege was now to be withdrawn, we should find a distinct ordinance of repeal, or prohibition of administering it to the infantile subject.* The command to give the seal of the promise was not necessary to those who had always understood that the promise was to them and to their children. Finally, the children of believers are called 'holy,'—though born in sin (1 Cor. vii.);—and while we cannot affirm the actual presence of saving grace with every baptized infant, how can we understand this as importing less than that those born into religious families are in some sense within the bond of the Church covenant? If the promise is to believers and to their children, as an apostle declares,—if God has promised to be their God and the God of their

* So Lightfoot and others have well reasoned.

seed, surely it is but consistent with these declarations, warranting at least the hope of saving grace, and implying God's claims of propriety in children as His heritage, that, as of old, the sign should not be withheld by which such hope may be confirmed, and such claims devoutly recognised.

3. Nor does this case of the converted Ethiopian rule the question as to the mode of baptism, though it is said that Philip went down into the water. The word "into" in the original often means simply "to," or close to. It is the same word which is used elsewhere, when it is said, Jesus came to the mountain—of course not into it. It may describe simple contact; but even taking it, as it doubtless may be taken, in the sense of more than contact, or, as translated here "into," it does not follow that the water was of adequate depth for immersing. Indeed, if travellers who have visited those places may be believed, there was no water at this point in which baptism could have been administered by immersing. And, how unlikely that a traveller, with no anticipation of such a thing, was prepared for receiving the ordinance in that mode! whereas; the very circumstance that he was travelling—no house of his own at hand—rendered the going down to, or into, the stream, natural, if, by the application of water in the mode of sprinkling or affusion, the ordinance was to be dispensed at all. How much less likely that baptism was administered universally by immersion,—where whole households were baptized indoors, and where often the means must have been wanting for such a method of administration; in fact, where no convenient or decent accommodation was

to be obtained ! It is no small confirmation to our mind of the warrantableness of "sprinkling," that this is the term so often used, or the kindred one of "pouring," to denote that application of the blood of Christ, or washing of regeneration, which gives to the ordinance all its significancy. Nor may we fail to observe that, in the immediate context of the passage in Isaiah discoursed upon by Philip, these words occur : 'So shall he sprinkle many nations : ' (Isa. lii. 15), words variously interpreted indeed, but most reasonably, as it appears to us, to be understood* of the willing subjection of the nations to the sceptre of Immanuel; and suggesting the method and form of confession we now defend.

4. The joy of the baptized, as he went on his way, warrants the reflection that the blessing of God is ready to crown consistent and avowed discipleship. Another argument this for a full confession of Christ ; and a reply to the indolent and selfish plea, 'We may have the good thing in our heart though we make no profession. What use of sacraments ? What use of joining any visible church ?' The eunuch's joy sprang mainly, no doubt, from what he believed. Good cause had he to rejoice in having found the pearl of great price—enriching him far more than could all the treasures of Ethiopia : but his joy may also have sprung, in part, from the consciousness of having been admitted to the communion of saints,—God's sacramental host in the world ; and, beyond doubt, to confess Christ and to own Him, yea, to suffer for Him, has the promise of a present and a future reward. Yet, see in the close of

* See Alexander on Isaiah.

the narrative that, as if to hide pride from the human instrument of his happiness, and to teach that the virtue of ordinances rests not in the administrator, "the Spirit caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more." The convert would naturally desire more of the company of his spiritual father; but He who had, by the intervention of his servant, brought him to the faith, could, by His power, preserve and perfect the good work, and more than supply the lack of an earthly guide.*

The eunuch went on his way rejoicing. Happy day for him—the day of his spiritual birth; or of his spiritual espousals! He had found Him of whom the prophets spake; and, doubtless, as Andrew with Peter, or Philip with Nathanael, he longed to communicate to others of his new-born joy. The probability, that the Ethiopian convert carried the gospel to his countrymen, is favoured by the interesting historical fact, that an Ethiopian or Abyssinian church has existed in those parts from the early ages—a church long remarkable, too, for its steady attachment to the pure doctrines and rites of Christianity.

A few reflections may be added in the way of improving, practically, our subject of discourse.

1. Let us mark the care of the Divine Shepherd in seek-

* "How admirable," it is well remarked by a pious author, "how perfect are the works of God! These two are brought together by the agency of an angel, and now they are parted asunder by a miracle; but a miracle of wisdom as well as of power. For this sudden and supernatural removal of the preacher was a powerful confirmation of the doctrine which he taught, and had an obvious tendency to impress on the mind of the new convert this important truth, that although a man had been employed as the instrument of his conversion, yet the work itself was truly divine, and the glory of it due to God alone."—Rev. R. WALKER, Edinburgh, colleague of BLAIR.

ing out His own. "Them also I must bring," He elsewhere says. He has all means, all agencies under His control; and see here the value of one soul in the eyes of the Saviour. See heavenly as well as earthly messengers employed; yea, the Spirit of the Lord concerning Himself directly in the spread of the gospel of the kingdom! Can we doubt his interest in the gospel still, or his delight in glorifying Christ by taking of the things that are His, and showing them unto men?

2. Shall we not commend the example of this humble inquirer, and his diligence in seeking more light; his care to redeem time, his making a chosen companion of the Book of Heaven, even in his journeying hours?—which leads us to reflect:

3. Thirdly, how precious is the privilege of free access to the sacred Scriptures! How manifestly is it the will of Christ that we should search them! How criminal the policy, by whomsoever perpetrated, which would withhold the light of Divine revelation from any, in the face of the Saviour's command!

But we see too that, though to the law and to the testimony everything must be brought, a blessing also stands connected with the preaching of the gospel, especially the exposition of the word itself. We have a fine proof here that, to them that have, more shall be given; that they who, with humble mind, seek to know the will of God more fully, shall find Him ready to meet them in the way of righteousness.

4. Shall we not test ourselves by the example of the Ethiopian's faith, and his respect for positive institutions?

Let us judge ourselves by the character of his faith as a faith with the heart—a faith which engaged his affections,—which wrought in him a love of Christ, and a desire to obey Him. Is *our* faith no more than a cold assent to truth; is it but an educational thing? Is it of heaven or of men? Does it rest on a Divine Saviour? Do we feel, like this convert, that it is founded on a perception of the glory and sufficiency of the Son of God? He, this confessor of Christ, was able to give a reason for his belief. Though faith is not mere knowledge, it is no blind principle: It is declared, “He that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, shall have eternal life.”

Finally, shall we not find cause of blame in ourselves, if aught earthly afford us greater joy, as we go on in the journey of life, than to have found the kingdom of heaven, or to have known the true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent? Our Saviour himself supplies us with a standard of judgment, by which we are to estimate present and eternal things comparatively: when He likens the kingdom of God to a man who findeth a treasure hid in a field, and who goeth and selleth all he hath—undervalues it comparatively, that is—and buys that field: Or, with Paul, he counts all things loss for Christ; eager ‘to win Him, and be found in Him.’

IV.

MEDIATORY PREROGATIVES OF CHRIST.

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them ; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."—JOHN v. 21-29.

In these verses, the Saviour continues the discourse concerning His claims as the true Messiah, into which He had been led by some fault-finders among the Jews. While He vindicates Himself from their reproaches, in connection with a work of mercy performed by Him on the Sabbath day, He asserts his authority in terms only appropriate to one who was conscious of possessing Divine attributes in common with God the Father, and at the same time, who in his mediatory capacity as the Messenger of the covenant, owned obedience to the Father's law. Various expressions in this discourse, accordingly, apply to Him in respect of His original or underived power as the Son of God: indeed this very appellation is used by Him in a high and peculiar sense, as the Jews rightly understood the term. Other expressions apply to Him more in respect of his delegated authority ; but even these latter describe powers and prerogatives which imply divinity, or are such as only a divine person is competent to wield. Thus, at verse twenty-first, He challenges as his prerogative the power of giving life, or quickening the dead. 'For as the Father

raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.'

We may understand this either of His power to convey spiritual life to the spiritually dead, or to restore natural life to those in whom the natural life has been extinguished. But, taken either way, how great and how far exalted above creature power is the prerogative asserted by him! Who can give life but God only? If the Son, then, gives life, and even as the Father gives, He must be God. For, this is something far greater than the power which prophets and apostles exercised in the name of God, and in the name of Jesus;—a power which they did not pretend to exercise at will, and the glory of which they ascribed to God entirely. This power which He lays claim to has no limit, it appears, but his own will, or the Father's, as one with his own; and it is said here to be so exercised by Him as that the glory is his in fellowship with the Father, or that all men, even as they honour the Father, are to honour the Son. In the twenty-second verse, in like manner, "all judgment" is said to be committed to the Son. This, like the quickening of the dead mentioned in the former verse, may comprehend the spiritual judgment which he exercises even in this present state,—in superintending the kingdom of grace, dispensing its privileges, and determining the condition of its subjects,—as well as the final judgment; for the latter is more particularly referred to in the subsequent verses, as is also the general resurrection.

We do not, therefore, consider this as mere unnecessary repetition. In the following verses, where He touches so

solemnly on the resurrection and the judgment, we understand him as particularising what in the twenty-first and twenty-second verses He expresses more generally ; or, He describes, as concerned in those great final events, the same power, which before He has described in the more comprehensive sense as exercised in deciding on the spiritual states of men.

And so, before going on to these particular assertions of his authority in respect of the resurrection of the body, and the final judgment, our Lord declares another important truth, which implies in it no less really and conclusively his claim to Divine attributes ; that is, that believing on Him as the sent of God is the means of eternal safety for the soul. And mark the emphatic manner in which this is declared : " Verily, verily, I say unto you (ver. 24), He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life." A glorious declaration ! and one which, as we shall afterwards see, affords the most delightful encouragement to sinful creatures ; but which we notice now chiefly as containing an implied testimony to the Divine character of Christ. For, who that reflects upon the frequent mention of this as the great, the decisive condition on which man's eternal welfare depends, this trust in Jesus,—but must see that such language would have been altogether unsuited to any mere creature, the most exalted ? A confidence so firm, so implicit, so unreserved, and accompanied with a supreme esteem of the Saviour,—such devotion to Him as we ever find connected with the scripture delineations of faith,—

could not be reposed in any arm of flesh, without according to it that honour which Scripture forbids to be given. "Cursed is he who trusteth in man, or maketh flesh his arm:" is one of the immutable laws of God. Yet, frequently, unceasingly, are we invited so to trust in the Redeemer. Christ himself invites the guilty, the weary, the heavy laden, to make Him their confidence. "Ye believe in God; believe also in me." And here, in the passage immediately before us, though He speaks of believing in Him who sent him, yet it is evident that this is, in effect, believing in Himself as the sent. Now, on this hearing His words, and believing on Him, turns the question of men's deliverance from condemnation, and enjoyment of eternal life. Up to the time of their believing in Him, they are under condemnation—dead, so to speak. Onward, from the time of believing, they live; they live in the sense of being justified, they are accepted with God; and they live in the sense also of being sanctified, quickened to spiritual consciousness and capacities of spiritual enjoyment. So accepted are they, that from this state of justification they never can utterly fall; so quickened, that this new life can never be extinguished. Not merely shall such have life; they already, He declares, have it. It is not only said "they shall pass," but "they are passed" from death unto life.

Thus it is that, indeed, the Son quickeneth whom He will, or that the second Adam is "a quickening spirit;" and in the twenty-fifth verse, we may consider Him as still speaking of a spiritual resurrection, though He comes anon to speak of the resurrection of the body also.

Ver. 25.—'Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is

coming, and now is:"—there were instances of this already in the conversions of souls which were taking place, and also, already, in the reanimation of dead bodies, as an earnest and pledge of the final rising of the dead from their graves;—"when," says He, "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For (ver. 26) as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." We might understand these words either of the Son's essential generation from the Father, or of his mediatory derived power, which last we the rather understand to be meant, that He is spoken of in the next verse as the Son of Man: "And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."

None, indeed, but a God could judge the world; yet here it is said, "Because He is man, judgment is committed unto him." For, our Redeemer possesses a human as well as a divine nature: As man alone, indeed, He could not have been competent to such a trust or prerogative; yet it was meet that he who is to be the judge should also be man. It was meet that He should have a human nature who was to judge those who are of the human nature. It is fitting that, as a judge, He should be visible to the senses: "Every eye shall see him." Besides, "the Son of man" denotes him the Surety and the Saviour incarnate; and there is a fitness that He who was to be the Mediator between God and men should have the power of adjudging to happiness the willing subjects of His grace, or to misery the recusants of His authority. To be a Saviour fully, it is necessary He should be a judge as well as a prophet and a priest—a

priest to atone; a prophet to instruct; a judge to award blessing or curse, death or life. How suitable that He who is the author and finisher of faith, the deliverer of the spiritual captives from the power of Satan, should also be empowered to see to the ultimate acquittal of His ransomed ones, and himself introduce them with gladness to their rest and inheritance! It was fitting as a part of his mediatory reward, that having humbled himself low, He should thus be exalted very high; and, hence, so often we read of the Son of man coming "in His glory," and "in the glory of the Father," as opposed to His original coming in his humiliation. How to his own who look for Him will the majesty of the scene be thus attempered with grace! how it will enhance their joy to recognise in the Judge the same glorious One whom they have trusted as their Saviour! And how fitted to enhance the terribleness of the judgment to the heirs of damnation, to see Him the bestower of crowns whose cross they refused to bear! Him the acknowledged Lord of the dead and the living, whom they rejected as the man of sorrows, and the root out of a dry ground!

So, he adds emphatically (ver. 28), "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." What tremendous words these! Who can exaggerate their importance? All shall hear His voice,—all, all, each one, every one, shall hear the voice of the Son of God! The trumpet shall sound; and at that sound, the generations

that have slept their long sleep shall spring forth from the bosom of corruption. That sound shall penetrate the deepest recesses of earth, and the lowest caverns of ocean. None shall fail to hear, none refuse to answer. None shall be able to elude His all-seeing eye, nor decline His all-powerful mandate. The dead in Christ will arise with gladness; they look up, and know that the day of their redemption has come; the others cannot refuse obedience to the summons, though they would. Before the power of Christ, what resistance shall avail? In vain will they invoke the mountains to cover them from His sight; the graves to which they would cling will not conceal nor retain them; nor shall one conceal or deliver his fellow. In that great day "*we must*," says the apostle, "all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ: every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv.; 2 Cor. v.) He will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. In acting thus, then, the Son is not alone. He comes in the glory of the Father. In his mediatory character, He will execute the Father's high and sovereign mandates. He hath committed all judgment to the Son, and *His* judgment is final. Of Christ's acquittal of the righteous there shall be no reversal; from His condemnation of the unbelieving no appeal!

PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT.—The practical lessons of the whole passage are such as these:—How precious is faith! how reasonable! How much depends on it for the future; for everlasting; and for the present also!

The alternative, even now, is condemnation or salvation,

The unbeliever is "condemned already:" The unsaved sinner, the carnal worldling, is dead while he liveth. There is a twofold judgment in this passage; and also a twofold resurrection. Our concern is immediate with Him to whom the Father hath committed the ministration of life. He speaks to us from heaven *now*; by the still small voice of the Gospel does He seek to awaken us from our death in sins; his quickening power is in and with his word of invitation and of command—Believe and live; "awake, thou that sleepest (in thy sins), and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." The Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins; and now, as surely, and effectually, to all of you who hear His word, and who trust in Him, He shall separate between you and your sins, between you and the wrath that lies on you, as He will at length surely pronounce your admission to life everlasting, or seal the unbeliever's doom. Is He to come in the glory of the Father? Already He comes in that glory. Refusing Him, O child of disobedience, you refuse God. His name is in Him. He sent him; He sealed him; from the heavens He has said, "Hear ye Him." He himself declares, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." And the Spirit saith, Come. *He* glorifies Christ; He communicates no saving life apart from Him.

Further; how well warranted, O sinner, is your faith in this Saviour, the ambassador of God, yea, Himself very God of very God! At once God and man, your hope in Him will not disappoint you. The faithful and true witness, He assures you of the terms of life: He has the right

to propose these terms. How encouraging are they, how simple, how suitable to you! He asks no price, He imposes no burden, He prescribes no penance. Hear, believe, and your soul shall live. "*He* that heareth." "*Whosoever* believeth in Him." It is as individuals He deals with us; as individuals he addresses himself to us. Is life eternal so small an interest that we can treat the invitations of Christ with cold indifference? Is His authority such as we may with safety despise? Unbelief is rebellion; and to have refused to obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is pronounced to have, for its end, "everlasting destruction." In proportion to the greatness of the salvation offered to us will be the judgment against gospel despisers. Grace abused is followed by wrath, yea, the wrath of the Lamb.

Again, the passage teaches us that not only the judgment is now, but that the resurrection is now. No resurrection of the body, I mean no blessed resurrection, without a resurrection—a quickening of the soul! Nor do we realise experimentally the extent of our moral necessity, or the value of the salvation that we have in Christ, if we find not, with faith in Him, a regeneration to a new life. If you have truly passed from your death of condemnation by believing on Christ, you will also have passed from your death in trespasses and sins. Happy are they in whom this change has been effected! A new life has entered your souls; you are new creatures; you were contrary to God as well as separate from God. You now live and have your being in Him not as creatures only, but new creatures; your life is hid with Him, is by Him, and unto Him. No formal thing now your obedience to Christ;

there is life in it: no forced thing; it is your second nature. You breathe as in a new element. One blood with Adam, you are now as really one spirit with Christ. It is not His favour only, it is His image which is restored to you. This is the resurrection of the soul, and an indispensable antecedent to the blessed resurrection of the body. Those only are worthy of that hope, the children of the resurrection, whose souls alive now are conversant with the things unseen of a spiritual world, and who are endued with the new capacities, breathe the new desires, and follow the new aims and ends of spiritual men.

Finally, realise the certain prospect of a judgment and resurrection day as here so solemnly announced. The day, the hour cometh: See how emphatic are His words: fitted to summon attention, to reprove security, to inspire joy. Blessed prospect! Let the children of God exult in the anticipation; let them be looking and hastening to the day of God; let them, amidst trials of faith, possess their souls in patience. Though the vision tarry, wait for it; it will not always tarry. And let not others presumptuously ask, "Where is the promise of his coming?—all things continue in the same course, the same evenly round." If the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as men count slackness, neither is he slack concerning his threatening? Every hour is bringing that hour nearer, which is laden with issues so portentous. Let the unbelieving and ungodly know that their judgment lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. Let not the patience or long-suffering of the Lord mislead them. He hath appointed a day: it will certainly come. And, oh, how precious are

those opportunities still with us, but so brief and so uncertain, on which, according as they are well used or lost, the question turns of acceptance, or rejection, by the righteous Judge of all ; of a resurrection to life, or a resurrection to damnation and shame ! The door is yet open ! It will—who knows how speedily ?—be shut !

V.

THE MESSIAH'S WORK AND REWARD.

‘He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied: By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.’—ISAIAH liii. 11.

THIS book of prophecy has been justly accounted remarkable for the clearness and fulness of its predictions concerning the Messiah. The references in the New Testament to this very chapter, place beyond all doubt the application of the prophecy to Christ: though, if these had been less explicit, the delineations both of Christ's sufferings and of His glory are so minute that we may well wonder, now at least, that with any it should be a question:—Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Only the veil of Jewish prejudice, or the spirit of a wayward criticism, can hide the truth from Jew or Gentile.

It is not in one verse only that Christ is pointed to as our atoning Priest, and as Himself the victim of sacrifice. The subject fills the chapter; and what a variety of particulars concerning the character and object of His sufferings, and the demeanour of the glorious sufferer, may be gathered from these few verses! Here is touchingly described the humble manner of His advent,—‘He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of

a dry ground ;" the ungrateful reception given to Him by His own, or a world He came to save,—“we hid as it were our faces from Him :” Then, the intensity of His sufferings, and their variety—from the hand of man—from the hand of God—sufferings of body, sufferings of soul ; the evidence of His own will being concerned, as of one consecrating Himself, not dragged reluctant to the altar, “led as a sheep to the slaughter”—“pouring out His soul unto death :” The agency of the Divine lawgiver in the exaction of the award from the surety,—“It pleased the Lord to bruise Him ;” the relation of His sufferings to our sins as their cause, and to our reconciliation as their design : withal, the blessed fruit, in the Saviour’s exaltation, and the redemption of His people. All these momentous points are here assembled, and in how brief space ! The scenes of the Saviour’s humiliation, though future, pass before the prophet’s eye as if present, and they are described by him in the glowing, yet tender, language of an interested and affected spectator. Like a fifth evangelist, as Isaiah has sometimes been termed, he might seem as if standing beside the forerunner of Jesus, when he exclaimed, pointing to the Word manifested in the flesh, “Behold the Lamb of God !”

The words of our text combine a reference at once to the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. We propose, in dependence on the Divine blessing, to speak :—

I. Of the office which Christ sustains, as here denominated Jehovah’s servant :

II. Of His suffering work as here described, the “travail of His soul :”

III. Of the blessed result as here affirmed, and

IV. Lastly, Of the manner or means of our participating in that result; "by the knowledge of Him, shall my righteous servant justify many."

I. We invite attention to the denomination here applied to the Messiah, Jehovah's "righteous servant." It may at once be seen that the covenant of redemption is implied. It is only by a voluntary arrangement that He—Jehovah's equal or fellow—was to appear in a subordinate capacity. But though he was a Son, He condescended to be obedient—a servant and sufferer for our sakes. In this capacity we find the Eternal Father, in other parts of prophecy as well as here, commending Him to the faith and admiration of men: "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth (Isaiah xlii.);" and again, "Behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH." It is surely confirmatory of our faith, to hear the Eternal Lawgiver, ages before the Saviour's advent, thus evincing interest in his great undertaking, and confidence in his sufficiency. He who by a voice from the excellent glory avouched Him His beloved Son, no less owns Him in the humble capacity He had assumed as the messenger of the covenant: for Him hath God the Father sealed.

And so it is not only as "servant," but as Jehovah's "righteous servant" He is spoken of. Either His inherent moral excellence is here meant; for such an high priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, "needing not first to offer for Himself;" or, His fulfilment of all righteousness in his capacity of surety may be in view

and it concerns our comfort to hear from the lips of the Sovereign Lawgiver this testimony to his fidelity—like Moses—to Him who appointed him,—this assurance that in nothing would he fail to render to the law's precept the required obedience, nor withhold aught of the exacted submission to its penal award. In the New Testament, as in the Old, He is denominated "the just one." "A faithful as well as merciful high-priest in things pertaining to God," is the qualification affirmed of Him by one apostle; and another characterises Him "Jesus Christ the righteous"—so the beloved apostle denominates Him, in the act of directing the sin-stricken soul to His propitiation and advocacy.

II. Let us next, then, look at the description, by the prophet, of the Messiah's work. It was no light labour that devolved on Him. They form a very inadequate idea of the cost of redemption, who think only of what was bodily and visible in the Saviour's sufferings. Redemption, our text tells us, was "the travail of His soul." How fitted this to recall His own words: "Now is my soul troubled! and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour!" Nor need we limit his soul travail to the hours of his agony, usually so called; for, throughout His entire course on earth, though relieved by intervals of joy in the consciousness of the Father's presence, and the prospect of the reward set before him, He was "a man of sorrows," familiar with grief; from birth to death fulfilling the work given him to do, under the weight of the incumbent curse. But, then especially, did He travail as in birth for a world's regeneration, when He bowed his head under the imme-

diate pressure of Jehovah's hand, and drank to its dregs the bitter cup which that very hand had mixed. Who can tell the import of those sorrowful words uttered in His latest hours? Who can fathom the depths of that anguish which no words were adequate to express, and which sought expression in the blood-like sweat, and in the sore crying and tears? No wonder that earth shook, and that the sun, as ashamed, retired from the sight, when the very Sun of righteousness went down in blood, and the beloved One of the Father, as one forsaken, was heard to invoke the Father's interposition, and, as it might seem, invoked it in vain!—yet, not in vain. For “He was heard in that He feared.” Even then He saw of the travail of his soul—He saw it and was glad. As the dying conqueror shuts his eyes in peace, and smiles on the wound that is mortal, when the banners of victory are waving over his head; or as the mother forgets her toils for joy that a man-child is born into the world; so that hour of darkness and of wrath, which closed the eyes of the suffering Saviour, was brightened by the inward satisfaction, the conscious triumph of victory. He exclaimed, “It is finished!” and the quaking earth, and the rending rocks, echoed back the sound!

III. The text declares, accordingly, the result of Christ's sufferings, the success of His undertaking. Nor is it man's salvation alone that was designed. When, in the context, we read of the “pleasure of Jehovah prospering in His hand,” a still higher object must be considered, as in the contemplation of God's righteous servant. We learn what was his highest aim, from Christ's own words. Hear His

declaration in his prayer to the Father: "I have glorified Thee on the earth;" and in connection with the words already quoted, uttered in all but his latest hour: "Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour:" let us mark what He adds: "but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." How full of interest the fact, that on the very eve of the great crisis,—in the prospect of His final encounter with the powers of darkness, His eye is fixed only on the great end, as if looking past all that was between: "Father, glorify thy name!"

Sin had tarnished the Divine glory. The devil, in seducing man from God, and in turning into a theatre of rebellion and misery a world formed to be the abode of innocence and bliss, might seem to have triumphed, or defeated the Almighty's purpose. Hence it is said: "The Son of God was manifested, to destroy the works of the devil." If it be inquired, How? our answer is,—As sin was the occasion of his usurped power, its expiation was the destruction of that power. The hour when sin was condemned in the flesh of the Son of God, was the knell of Satan's thralldom: then was the head of the serpent bruised; God's rightful dominion re-established. And, surely, if the Saviour rejoiced in spirit when He beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven, on occasion of the release of individual souls from the grasp of the oppressor; much more did He see of the travail of his soul, and rejoice, when He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly in his cross! So, also, if the glory of God was tarnished in the law being set at nought, its honours were re-

tried by an obedience divinely perfect, and a sacrifice of priceless value. Here death, too, received its own death, when that which was its sting was by that sacrifice "put away," and the condemning law, whence sin derives its "strength," was magnified.

And so the prospect of the result to man, as well as the glory redounding to God, is represented as constituting largely an element in the Saviour's satisfaction :—"By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." This is set forth as the mediator's reward. It is made certain by the covenant. It is not left a thing of contingency. It is promised to Him—a definite effect of a defined and fulfilled condition; that condition being His bearing his people's iniquities.

In no part of Scripture is the reality of a vicarious atonement and its definite design brought more clearly out. Here are cause and effect—the salvation of a people connected with the bearing of their iniquities by the surety. The words of the sacred writer are alike irreconcilable with the Socinian's theory; and with that which, evading the idea of commutative satisfaction to the justice of God, reduces the atonement to a general moral demonstration of the Divine holiness, united with a display of His willingness to save as many as might seek peace through the reconciliation. The first theory—that of the Socinian—in refusing all idea of satisfaction to justice, only shifts the difficulty it seeks to evade. For, how can they vindicate the permission by a holy God of an innocent one being subjected to suffering—and such suffering!—if the sufferer stood in no relation to the sinner, involving obligation to a

violated law? The other theory leaves us almost as perplexed. It supposes a demonstration of God's hatred of sin necessary; but, how it could illustrate holiness in the lawgiver, if we exclude the idea of vicarious satisfaction, or the imputation of guilt, it is not easy to see; nor, what impression it could make on the universe as to God's rectoral justice, if no acquittal on the one part was to be secured, any more than a transfer of sin to the surety recognised. On this theory of a general demonstration, Christ seems scarcely more identified with sinners of mankind than with sinning angels; and it seems impossible to explain how, if no claim of righteousness required to be satisfied, the effect should be the justification of many. Let it be observed, it is *justification* which is affirmed to be the effect; it is not simply forgiveness. The idea is not the dispensing of arbitrary favour; it is no mere act of clemency; no simple amnesty. Justification is a different thing. It involves the recognition of a claim, not indeed of merit in the justified—for how then could God be said to justify the ungodly?—but of service by the surety. It is on the footing of righteousness such an act proceeds, not on the ground of any compromise, any evasion of the requirements of law. Christ was "made under the law." He is the end of the law "for righteousness." Its requirements fulfilled, the debt paid, the rightful consequence is represented as following—the debtor is discharged, the condemnation is cancelled; the sinner is more than pardoned, is regarded as standing innocent, or as if just at God's tribunal; is accepted as righteous, as if in his own person he had done all, fulfilled all: the sinless surety not more really having been "made

sin" by imputation of guilt, than the believing sinner is by imputation "made the righteousness of God in Him." And, in harmony with this idea, mark how in our text, not only is the justification of many recognised as a rightful consequence of the humiliation of the surety, but the act of justifying is recognised as His. It is elsewhere, indeed, attributed to the Father. "It is God that justifieth:" yet so, it appears, that all judgment is committed to the Son. The meaning plainly is, Christ is admitted to claim as His by right of purchase, those destined to be His by the Father's grant.

In some sense, each Divine Person is concerned in the justifying as well as sanctifying of the saved. If it is in the name of Jesus, it is also "by the Spirit of our God," working in them the faith which apprehends Christ for righteousness. So truly "are all things of God (as saith the apostle), who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ."

IV. So, finally, we mark in our text the way of our being effectually interested in the work of the Saviour. By His knowledge, or—for it seems to be objectively meant—by knowledge of, or faith in Him, are 'the many' justified. Knowledge and faith are in this matter identified. These are, indeed, distinguished from one another sometimes. All knowledge is not faith; yet the latter includes the former. He that *seeth* the Son, and believeth on Him, hath eternal life. Such, however, is the freedom of Scripture language—not to be limited by our technicalities—that knowledge again is, in a comprehensive sense of the term, inclusive of faith, and thus is made to express

all that is ulterior as well as elementary in fellowship with Christ. The apostle uses this word to express the highest object of his spiritual ambition:—"That I may know Him in the power of His resurrection, as well as be found in Him." In the occurrence of the word here, it may be taken as synonymous with faith, or standing in the same relation to the justification of the sinner. The thing claiming our chief notice is, that, by either or both, it is meant to exclude all pretensions of inherent worth in man himself: either word is a word of contrast with all self-justifying claims. And what can so impressively magnify grace, and silence boasting, as that simply by knowing, or believing in Christ, we pass from condemnation to life? Not by labouring for it, not as presuming on works of righteousness which we have done, but by looking to the glorious object set up before the eye of the mind; by knowing Him, trusting, receiving; only thus are we invested with the right which is in no wise found in ourselves, and admitted to the grace which no deeds of ours are sufficient to earn. This is heaven's "easy plan," not man's circuitous, laborious way; presumptuous withal. For, in exalting his vain endeavours to satisfy the law, he but evinces that he underrates the law. It is not that man owes not works, or that God's law doth not require them; it is that he hath not adequate works to offer, and he is remitted, for all hope of justification, to such a righteousness as is found for him in another. So do we find Old Testament and New harmonizing. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved; for I am God." "The Son of Man must be lifted up, that whoso believeth in Him should not perish." And how

expressive are these appeals of the apostle, designed to commend free and sovereign grace on the one hand, yet by faith to establish the law!—"Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above :) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;—That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT.—The subject suggests valuable instruction as well as to our duty as to our privilege. It may be observed that the words of our text bear the form of a promise; saying nothing of man's part, or any activity of his own. It is a characteristic of the method of grace, that the very faith on which his salvation depends is secured by covenant. The promises to Christ by the Father embrace the part required of His people. "To Him shall men come." "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Nevertheless, faith is a duty as well as a grace, a duty of imperative obligation. The promise is designed to stimulate, not to supersede, activity. Man *must* come—*must will*. It is not by violence to his rational nature his obedience of faith is secured; and, that knowledge is here put for faith, only manifests the more that God's saving purpose takes effect through the enlightenment of the

understanding, and its appreciation at once of the sinner's need, and the Saviour's sufficiency—'with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.' If the command to believe is urgent, the danger of unbelief is great. Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, is the counsel of inspired wisdom. While we are justified by faith only, yet faith itself must be justified by the works that flow from it. A salvation so based on righteousness implies, that any faith is false that issues not in the establishing of the law in the conscience, and the love of the law in the heart.

"Heaven's easy, artless, unincumbered plan" *

does not mean, that salvation by grace is "easy" in the sense that there can be no miscarrying, no believing in vain, no need for earnest solicitude. Nay, rather, what cost the travail of his soul to the surety may well warrant fear and trembling on the part of him who would make sure of appropriating the benefit; yet, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth? Such, it seems, is man's proneness to cling to self-righteous hopes—his aversion to submit to the righteousness of God—that it may be our consolation that faith is here *promised* as to many. The strength of the gospel preacher, in plying the ministry of reconciliation, lies not in any pre-supposed power of man's depraved will; but in this, that Christ SHALL see of the travail of His soul, and shall not have died in vain. But; he only acts the rational part who gives all diligence to make his calling and election sure; yea, who gives no rest to his eyes, nor slumber to his eye-lids, till he knows himself among the justified, and ceases to be

* Cowper.

of the condemned ;—till God is glorified, till Christ is satisfied, in his salvation.

Finally, we would urge the great truth implied in our text, as an incentive to your acquiescence in the method of grace: God *is* glorified by it. And as well as the Son, the Father is satisfied. Mercy and truth meet together here. The Lawgiver rests well pleased with the obedience of His righteous servant. He grudges Him not his reward! He remembers his gifts; accepts his sacrifice. Yea, His own love, as well as the Son's, is in the matter; providing the surety, honouring Him, exalting Him; loving Him the more, that He laid down his life for the sheep. All divine persons are harmonized, and all divine perfections. The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And, "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

VI.

THE COMMUNION OF CHRIST'S BODY AND BLOOD.

"For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."—JOHN vi. 55.

THAT a spiritual participation of Christ is here meant, it will be our first object to show; or, in other words, that not only is no mere corporal or carnal participation of His flesh and blood intended, such as some explain the Lord's Supper to imply, but that not even a sacramental participation at all is the subject discoursed of.

Our second object is to illustrate the real meaning of the passage, as setting forth in figurative terms the nature of the life of faith; or, faith's communion with the Saviour, in its preciousness as thus represented in respect of its object, its nature, and its blessed effects.

I. When we say that the passage is wrongly interpreted of the Lord's Supper, we do not mean, of course, that the communion of faith here described may not be enjoyed in that ordinance. The Apostle Paul expressly says (1 Cor. x. 16), "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" We certainly have, thus, apostolic authority for believing

that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is a means—yea, an eminent means—of enjoying the communion with Christ here insisted on ; or that the ordinance sacramentally represents, seals, and applies Christ and His benefits to the believer. It is one thing to assert this ; it is quite another thing to say that our Lord is here immediately treating of that sacrament. He is speaking of a spiritual communion, for which the ordinance of the supper affords a choice opportunity and advantage, and without which it is of little value ; which communion, however, is not limited to any one ordinance ; nay, ought to be known and experienced in substance by every one who would be saved, before he takes the symbols of Christ's body and blood into his hands, and whether he may ever have opportunity for observing that sacred ordinance or not.

First of all, one may see a strong presumption against a literal interpretation, in the fact that the sacrament of the supper had not yet been instituted when our Lord held this discourse ; whereas He is here asserting a truth of immediate and universal concern : directing his hearers to labour for the true bread, of which He says, " My Father giveth it to you : " nay, declaring the impossibility of enjoying spiritual life in the neglect of this spiritual provision. Then, does He not add towards the close of his discourse, as if guarding against applying his words to aught material or external (ver. 63), " It is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." *

* The view here given of our Lord's words coincides with that given by Calvin, who approves Augustine, that, in explaining this chapter, he never

But, what decisively proves, that the eating of Christ's body and the drinking of His blood are not to be identified with, or limited to, any outward or sacramental participation, is, that both what our Saviour sets forth of the benefit on the one hand, and of the danger or loss on the other, would conflict with fact, if understood of observing or neglecting the sacramental rite. Can we for a moment suppose that Christ meant to say, that whoever fails to take the sacrament of His body and blood perishes? Yet He does say, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you:" proving that the words must be spiritually meant. Or, is it not equally incredible that, when the Saviour asserts that he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever, He means to assure every one, who simply complies with the sacred rite, of eternal life? How evidently, we say, would both the declarations, so understood, conflict with facts! Have not thousands of persons who never sat at the table of the Lord—many of them never having enjoyed even the opportunity—young persons, for example, dying in non-age—have they not yet exhibited unquestionable evidence of having a saving part in Christ? Can we refuse to believe the same of some who have departed in adult years, having neglected this ordinance—to their loss, doubtless,—yet who repented of this as of other sins of omission, and welcomed, though late, the message of mercy? Then, who

touches the subject of the sacrament till he comes to the end. But Calvin, as well as Augustine, allows that Christ would have the sacrament of the supper to be a sign and seal of this spiritual participation: '*Et certe inep- tum fuisset ac intempestivum de cœna tunc disserere, quam nondum instituerat.*'

knows not that many have used the sacred rite to no saving purpose; yea, have eaten and drank to their condemnation,—only complying with custom; or, worse, taking into their hands, avowedly for mere secular ends, the memorials of a Saviour whose cross they despised, and whose yoke they scorned to bear?

II. What, then, it may be asked, was the design of using such words, if something spiritual, not carnal, is intended? Now, we shall see a fitness in the language employed worthy of the great Teacher, if we interpret it in the light of the simpler terms elsewhere used as to the foundation of a sinner's hope, and the means of the soul's fellowship with God. It is no violent straining of language to apply the metaphor of eating or drinking to intellectual exercises; nor is it peculiar to this passage of Scripture to represent spiritual desire and satisfaction by language taken from the bodily senses or appetites. "Wisdom" invites to "come, eat of her bread, and drink of the wine which she has mingled" (Prov. ix.) In similar words, the Prophet Isaiah (chap. lv.) commends the true food, or spiritual dainties, in distinction from that which is "not bread, and satisfieth not,"—meaning, by this last, worldly or creature good, apart from God. It is nothing alien, then, to the style of Scripture, when the Saviour here says, "I am the living bread, the bread of God which cometh down from heaven." Christ is, to the soul, as indispensable, for its spiritual life and strength, as the bread which perishes is needful to the life of the body. Nor is it this general truth alone that our Lord expresses. He acquaints us how

it is that He is our life, or by what means: 'The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world' (ver. 51). We learn here, as to the spiritual communion, how largely the doctrine of Christ's substitution and sacrifice enters into the object of faith; and also have presented to us an instructive view of the nature of faith itself, or how it is to be exercised, as well as on, or about, what. Who can fail to see, that Christ is a Saviour specially or primarily by His atoning work as our Priest? The language here employed is all suitable to this view, and consistent with no other. How is it possible to accommodate it to the low and attenuated meaning, that we must receive and digest Christ's precepts, and receive into our minds the message of immortality which He brought?—A cold interpretation sought to be forced on our Lord's words by those who would evade the great central article of our faith, so prominent in the teachings both of our Lord Himself and His apostles! When we know, from His own declarations, that He came to lay down His life a ransom for many; when we hear one apostle glorying in this, as the prime article of his preaching,—Christ crucified, the power of God, and the wisdom of God unto salvation; another declaring that He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; a third that Christ redeemed us by His precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;—how can we understand our Saviour as meaning less than that this doctrine is vital to the life of our souls; that this we must receive and digest as the essential aliment of our spiritual being? The great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh,

though a stumbling-block to the Jew, and to the Greek foolishness, we must acquiesce in and take to our hearts. It is he who believeth that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh who is of God. But neither is it His coming in the flesh that is alone insisted on as the object of our faith. Why is His blood mentioned again and again, and the drinking of His blood, but to impress upon us, that it was not His incarnation alone, or His coming into the fellowship of our common nature, that sufficed; but in that nature dying the death for us? So much emphatic mention of eating His flesh and drinking His blood is surely designed to teach, that it is in his doing and dying He fulfilled all righteousness; and that it is in the faith of this doing and dying alone, they who are "without strength" find themselves strong to stand before the holy God! Yet neither, as regards the object of faith, is it enough that our reliance be on the suffering *man*. We may observe that the divinity, as well as humanity, of Christ is that which is to be appropriated and rested on. "I am," He says, "the bread which came down from heaven."

A faith in the humanity alone does not suffice: nor could reliance on the suffering of a mere man impart peace to the anxious spirit. It is in the contemplation of the God-man bearing the burden of its guilt, the soul finds the strength it seeks, and attains to a ground of hope sure and satisfying. Here, he that thirsteth finds the living water; he that hungereth "eats that which is good."

And next, mark as to faith's exercise as well as object, how it terminates on Christ Himself, not only his benefits: "He that eateth *me*, he shall live by *me*." Faith rests on

Christ's person and work. Faith unites to Christ, brings Him near, identifies the believing soul with Him: just as in eating bread, there is a close union between the partaker and that which is participated of, so is it here. We are doubtless reminded, by such a comparison, how very different a thing saving appropriating belief is from a vague, cold, assent to the gospel message. We must *taste* as well as hear, or intellectually know, that God is good; we must receive and use the living bread; we must be in Christ, and Christ in us. Faith is represented in Scripture by a diversity of words and metaphors, in allusion to each bodily sense. It is hearing, seeing, touching, smelling; but no analogy is more expressive, more fitted to suggest what faith effects as the bond of union with the Saviour, than this of "eating" the bread: that which is eaten becomes identified with our body, yea, by assimilation, a part of our very selves. Some would say, with Calvin, that not faith simply is meant by the eating and drinking, but faith together with the sense of enjoyment, which is scarcely separable from it; or, if we rigidly distinguish faith from its accompaniments or effects, it is only more confirmatory of what has been said by us against the sacramentarian interpretation; that the effect which is in some verses described in figurative language, is in another verse of the same discourse simply attributed to a "coming to Christ;" and this "coming" is made identical with "believing" (ver. 35), "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

III. How great, then, is the blessedness which accom-

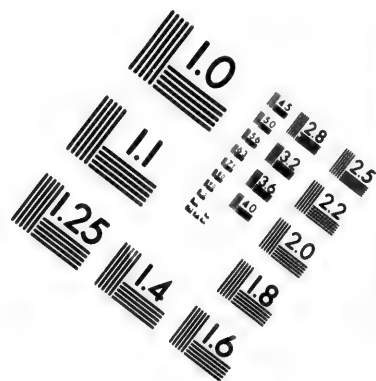
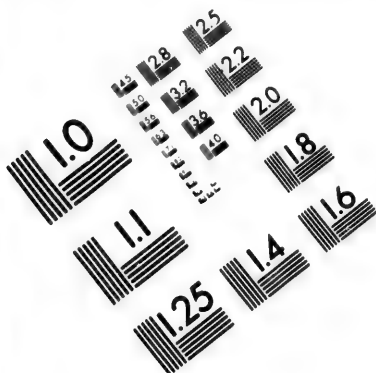
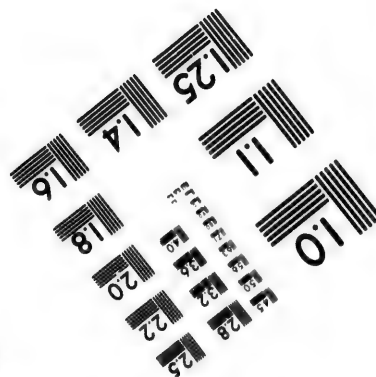
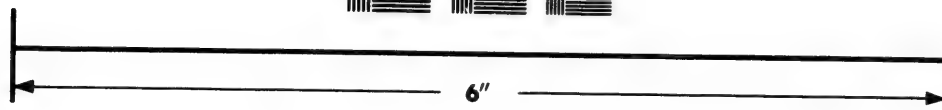
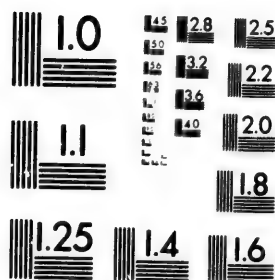


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panies or flows from union with the Saviour, or communion with Him! No more hunger, no more thirst: satisfaction, content, is signified; something which no earthly things can minister to the mind. These, at the best, leave the mind restless. In vain all human specifics to relieve the conscience, or to fill the heart! Only he who eats of wisdom's bread can say, I have found that which is good. Not, certainly, that in every sense of the word the believer shall cease to hunger or cease to thirst; for "blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." But the meaning is, nothing shall be desired in comparison with Christ and His salvation; nothing instead will content; here is what will satisfy, yet never sate; the conscience, the heart, are no more restless; nothing is left to be desired in comparison; nothing for the sake of which this would be parted with. Having tasted of this bread, the Christian says, "Ever give me of this;" having drunk of this water, this wine, he only longs to drink it new and more abundantly in his Father's kingdom.

Again, the blessedness is described thus: "He hath eternal life,"—"hath," not simply "shall have." And extending the meaning of "life" to the resurrection of the body, as well as to the blessedness of the soul, the Saviour adds, "And I will raise him up at the last day."

Well might the heavenly Teacher say, looking at these effects of spiritual communion with Christ's body and blood: "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed!" as if to assure us that, though the language is figurative, the meaning is gloriously real; no mere figurative or hyperbolical utterance of what, when stripped of metaphor,

dwindles to a small or common thing. No, the truth far exceeds the figure. Other bread sustains the body; this the soul: yea, to the body also secures life from the dead. Other bread prolongs life; this perpetuates it; I may say, initiates it also. Other bread is assimilated to the participant; here is assimilation as real, but it is of the participant to the living bread. The effect of faith in Christ is the conformity of the soul to the image of God's Son; and, of the body "to His own glorious body."

Yet one thing more is here; and this last is the greatest element in the blessedness: "He dwelleth in me," says the Saviour, "and I in Him." Who can tell the import of such words? We see at least something habitual, not occasional, is meant; something permanent, not transient; and what closeness of intimacy is suggested! what communion of interests, of sympathy, of affection! It is more than union: for those already *in* Christ, the apostle prays that Christ may "dwell" in their hearts by faith, and that they may be filled with the fulness of God. And mark how Christ Himself elsewhere promises this high privilege—not attained at once—to those by whom faith is diligently exercised, a faith that approves itself the spring of active and fervent love. "If a man love me, he shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him; and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."

APPLICATION.—Surely our part is more than to understand the meaning of such words. Can we hear of this spiritual provision, of which there is enough in our Father's house, and to spare, and shall we perish with hunger?

Assuredly we need not. For of this heavenly bread it may be affirmed, it multiplies in the breaking; and how freely is it dispensed! "My Father," said Jesus, "giveth you the true bread from heaven." Yet, as of the living water, (John iv.) so also of the heavenly bread He would say, "If thou hadst asked of him, he would have given thee." And see how he exhorts, "Labour (more than anything earthly) for the bread which endureth unto eternal life." "Labour for it;"—not that labour can earn it, not that money can purchase it, but that pains as well as prayers, through faith in Christ, are necessary to secure it. Make earnest work of it, he means. True faith, as we have seen, is appropriating. What would earthly bread avail us if simply talked about, looked at, handled? We must "receive" the Lord Jesus. And religion begins in the sense of need: "blessed," Jesus himself said, "are they that hunger." Happy are they who are emptied of themselves: we must become poor that we may be rich. Not till we see that we are sinners ready to perish will we value the spiritual provision. But, once truly convinced of sin and misery, then in proportion to our sense of helplessness, will be our diligence in working out our salvation, in making our calling and our election sure. Strange that so many, while alive to bodily wants, look so little to their eternal! How much more rational to forget all lower interests in comparison! "Labour not for the bread that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto eternal life." It is comparatively meant: He does not seek to discourage industry. But here,—He would say—is the chief field for industry; here is the one object to be lived for, or to which every

other should be subordinated. Instead of leaving the kingdom of God to be sought, after all other necessities are provided for, account this your chief necessity: "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."

Then, another lesson of this passage is that of daily dependence on Christ for spiritual life, and strength, and comfort. Bread is of daily necessity: it is not once, it is often you must recur to its use; otherwise you languish, you pine away. So it is not once, it is not at conversion only, that Christ will be esteemed precious. We must abide in him: we must be coming to him daily: our life must be by the faith of the Son of God, from day to day, from hour to hour. And how needful is it that we beware of so turning aside to other objects as to lose our relish for this spiritual food, or, even of so resting in grace received as that thus, like the manna reserved, in the neglect of fresh gathering, our very virtues should keep us from Christ!

Nor will we conclude without adverting to the subject of the Lord's Supper in its true design and use: the rather that in the commencement of our discourse we felt it to be incumbent on us to rescue the passage before us from misinterpretation; and, in so doing, denied that our Lord is here speaking of that ordinance at all. Just the more, would we now assert its preciousness in its proper place. In one passage already referred to, we do read that the bread which is broken is the communion of the body, and the cup of blessing is the communion of the blood of Christ,—significant of them as emblems—our partaking of them significant of our believing reception of Christ and his benefits. Not however that the real participation is to be

identified with the external observance—though the latter may assist and subserve the former; nor that the spiritual eating and drinking is limited to the eucharist: but let it be conceded, nay let it be affirmed and urged, that this sacred ordinance is singularly adapted to minister to that communion with the Saviour in which the quickened soul delights, and which by every likely means it should cherish. Here the senses come eminently to the aid of faith. And where may the presence of the Lord be expected? Where may the spiritual affections be likely to flow forth, the spices of the graces to yield their fragrance, and Christ himself to draw near and eat his pleasant fruits,—if not at that table spread in remembrance of Him; where the covenant is sealed anew, and the devout worshipper, in obedience to Christ's endearing command, takes into his hands the affecting symbols of his cross and passion, the pledges of his love, and of his coming again; the token also, on the Christian's side, of his love and fidelity to his absent Lord, in whom, though not seeing him, he believes, and with whom he hopes to dwell for ever, and to behold his glory, in the mansions He has gone to prepare?

VII.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT—PEACE, ETC.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ; against such there is no law."

—GAL. v. 22, 23.

As with most of his other epistles, the inspired writer occupies the first part of this with doctrine; the latter with inculcations of duty. And it is worthy of remark that in none of the sacred writings are the obligations of morality, or the duties of life, insisted on with greater minuteness, than in those which contain the fullest assertion of the doctrines of grace. It is not uncommon for the adversaries of these doctrines to demand, Where is the security for holy living, if men are to be told that salvation is not at all by human works? If no righteousness of man can avail to justify him before God; if his own good works are to be held to be destitute of merit; what inducement remains to regulate our lives studiously by the moral law? Unquestionable it is that nowhere is it more uncompromisingly laid down that justification is by faith alone, than throughout this same epistle: yet where—we may ask—is there to be found in all the writings of heathen moralists anything approaching to the exalted and

refined rule of Christian virtue here exhibited? See here what cognizance Christianity takes of the whole man;—his tempers, his affections, as well as his outward conduct! What a revolution in the human character is here supposed to be effected in every one who believes the gospel! It is not in one summary word that the influence of faith on the life is described. What detail in this enumeration of the graces! what accumulation of terms! what various degrees and shadings of virtuousness!—love, joy, peace, fidelity, temperance, meekness! Who does not see, that, if these be the certain fruits of Christian regeneration—and it is here affirmed that they are such—the Gospel is indeed the friend of good morals, and that the moral structure whose foundation is laid in a true Gospel faith is as surpassing in its breadth or height, or the comprehensiveness of its range, as the foundation itself is deep-laid in a change of our very nature?

We would, therefore, invite attention to the designation applied to the graces or virtues here enumerated: Secondly, we would analyse one (or more) of these, and exhibit its relation to the rest.

I. The expression “fruit” of the Spirit is fitted to instruct us, considered whether in the relation in which the word stands to the preceding context generally, or to what are termed the works of the flesh enumerated immediately before.

1. That the Christian graces are called “fruit,” suggests their right place in the Christian scheme, and in Christian experience. They do not go before, but follow our accept-

ance with God. They are not the conditions of our justification; they presuppose it: they are the evidence, the effect, but not the cause of our being in a reconciled state.

2. Again, while called the fruit "of the Spirit," they are not the less to be reckoned fruit growing on the true vine, Christ himself. "Every *branch in me*"—he says—"that beareth fruit" . . . "without me ye can do nothing." From Him truly is all our fruit found: "abide in me, and I in you" are his precious words. The apostle does not forget this dependence of the graces on Christ: in the very bosom of this passage he reminds us of it. He says, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh" (ver. 24)—what is of the Spirit efficaciously is of Christ meritoriously. This relation of the Son to the Spirit is often brought before us by the sacred writers. In treating of the work of grace, they may be found referring to both, or to one and the other Divine person indifferently,—interchangeably; the Spirit being the immediate agent in sanctification, yet so acting from Christ that what is attributed to the one is also in another respect attributed to the other. The Saviour, in promising the Holy Ghost, leads us to expect in this the fulfilment of the promise of His own presence. "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19). And as a remarkable illustration of the same thing, we may note how Paul, in one verse of the eighth of Romans, speaks of the Spirit as dwelling in Christians, and, almost in the next clause, says, "If Christ be in you." Such is the effect of the undivided unity of Persons in the glorious Trinity—such

their oneness, as in essence, so in their operations in the economy of grace.

3. Again, the fruit of the Spirit is emphatically contrasted with "the works of the flesh." We might perhaps have expected the phrase, "works of the Spirit:" but the contrast is so put—"works of the flesh; fruit of the Spirit:" as if to remind us that this latter is altogether different from what is innate or indigenous. The one—the evil tempers and passions are our own—our native works—the appropriate development, alas, of our vitiated nature. Nothing else, nothing spiritually good, comes from it. Not that each of these is in each man developed; but there is none righteous: not one. Whatever is spiritually good is attributed to the Divine sanctifier—supposes an engrafting into the new stock; it is an exotic, not indigenous. Hence it is not so much as called the "work" of the renewed man, but rather the work of the Spirit in the man; though indeed also the working, the development of the new life imparted to him. Not one of these spiritual dispositions or acts belongs to the old nature!

4. Which again, suggests the remark, that, though there may be resemblances of these virtues in natural men, and some of the very names here given to spiritual graces are, in our popular language, given to certain qualities found in unregenerated persons; these qualities, whose value is not to be denied, are yet entirely different from, and inferior to, the corresponding constituent elements of the renewed nature. You may find in natural men, we readily admit, specimens of comparative virtuous excellence; fidelity or honour; meekness; temperance; charity, in

certain forms of it; and amiable philanthropy. But, what is implied in the apostle's words here, is, that you cannot find whether a pure charity, whether a comprehensive self-control, or temperance, or meekness, or whether a genuine and refined integrity, but not only in the new or heaven-born man. They are but superficial resemblances or counterfeits of any of these graces that are to be found in "the flesh." "That which is born of the flesh," the Saviour declares to be—but "flesh." For, observe, the word "flesh" is evidently used there, and here in our text also, of the carnal *mind*, and not of the *body* alone. We have but to name some of the works or passions here enumerated, "wrath, emulations, heresies;"—to prove that not gross bodily appetites only are so designated. Now, when the utmost is allowed to our fallen nature that can be claimed; even when it is admitted, as we cordially admit, that you will find in unconverted men specimens, say, of meekness, of honour, and of charity or philanthropy, praiseworthy, and to society as well as to themselves highly profitable; nay, more, such specimens as may seem to equal or surpass the developments of the new life in corresponding features of the character of renewed men: yet, so far from this fact yielding any just inference to the disadvantage of Christianity,—however it may be to the deserved reproach of Christians—it will be found, we affirm, on a fair analysis, that, first of all, these virtues of natural men are but a reflection of Christianity itself, an effect of an unacknowledged cause, or largely due to the presence and influence of believers among those who ignore their faith; and, secondly, when examined, these

virtues, so called, rivalling the efflorescence of real Christian principle, but lacking the root, are found, in the long-run, to come as far short of the graces of which they are the imitation, as the heavenly may be expected to excel the earthly. "Love" is the first element of the spiritual nature here enumerated. Now, though a natural or unspiritual man *may* love virtuously,—may love parent, or child, or wife; or the woman her husband, her sister:—this is little more than may be conceded as to inferior animated beings. But, admit more;—suppose this man of natural virtue to be liberal in his aims and largesses, beyond the family circle; a man of generous philanthropy and lofty patriotism: still, bring the Scripture test to bear on this show of excellence; we ask, Is this love, which often may be found in separation from the love of God, to be compared with that love of man, and of the brotherhood, which is based on obedience to the first and great commandment? Is *that* truly to be called love?—at least, is it love in its highest kind, which cares indeed for the bodily wants of children or servants, but neglects the necessary provision for the perishing souls of either? Or, are good faith, honour, gratitude, though worthy of praise by all means—are these in their manifestations toward fellow men, while limited to this sphere, to be counted equivalent to the faith and the gratitude which look to the claims of the Creator as well as of the creature?

Nay; take one more admission—Say that now and again, you shall find among the children of nature instances of self-government, meekness, temperance, equalling those spiritual developments, in some Christians, included under

the names of meekness and temperance—nay, not equalling only, but surpassing:—still; before we call this by the name of Christian virtue, or exalt it in comparison with the defective power of self-government in certain Christians, let it be considered whether such meekness existing apart from godliness may not be a mere indolent passiveness of nature, or even an indifference to moral distinctions. Into this last it certainly may sometimes be resolved, especially when set against that greater spiritual sensitiveness, which joined with zeal may, on some occasions, subject the Christian, because of his very fidelity or his impatience with sin, to the charge of being a troubler of Israel.

5. And so, finally, the language of this passage suggests that all the graces, not some of them only, are present in every true believer, albeit not in equal measure of development. It is not said, "the fruits" of the Spirit "are;" though we may warrantably thus speak of the Christian graces, looking at them in detail: but the singular term "fruit" is applied to them in the aggregate; appropriately indicating that, in every one having the Spirit, they are all present in their germ at least—are all essential elements of the "new man." Take, again, the gracious disposition of meekness. A devout man, who fails remarkably in the regulation of his temper, is justly disapproved. "A saint in the church and a devil at home," has been, perhaps with exaggeration, alleged as the character of some Christian professors; and what sight can be more unseemly? We do remember hearing that one eminent Christian said of another, who yet was not unworthily held in reputation

for godliness, "My brother has grace enough for two men, but he has not enough for himself!" Admitting such a case—shall we say that such a person lacked meekness altogether, because sooner angry than many, and surpassed in self-government by unconverted men beside him? Before we pronounce so sweeping a judgment, let us see which surpasses the other in manifestations of meekness on the large scale; when we have subjected that grace, or its rival virtue in natural men, to more comprehensive tests. I have heard of a really religious man who so scandalised a Christian brother by an outburst of passion,—on the eve, too, of an occasion of celebrating the Lord's Supper,—that the other had well-nigh resolved not to associate with him at the sacred feast. They happened to sojourn under one roof for the night, brought together by their common purpose of keeping the holy ordinance. The offended party, who had listened, grieved, to the ebullition of passion, had also the opportunity, unsought, to hear at midnight—what?—his offending brother's wrestlings in prayer. It was even with sore crying and tears, that he agonised, while he lay low before the Lord, reproaching himself bitterly, entreating pardon, vowing watchfulness, imploring grace! In this prostration of spirit, might not the All-seeing eye discern the lowliness, ay, the meekness, which, failing in the hour of temptation, was not wanting in the hour of revision? Might not a humiliation be seen here which some one prompter, but prouder too, in subordinating his natural impulses, never so deeply appreciated his sins as to feel, never so mastered his self-righteous pride, as once in earnest to express? Who shall say but that, in

the estimation of Him who trieth the heart, there came up a sweeter odour from this self-obeisance of the contrite one, than from the victory over himself easily won by the man of gentler temper, or prouder self-control? At any rate, if praise be accorded to him whom an equal provocation shall scarcely have discomposed or ruffled, let it not be denied that meekness in another form was here. We only seek to prove, not that every grace is equally developed in every Christian, but that the one "fruit" of the Spirit is inclusive of the germ or seed of all.

II. Let us, as proposed, analyse more directly one of these graces, looking at it in its relation to others. Let us select "Peace." How frequent the mention in Scripture of this blessing—"the peace of God," which "passeth understanding!" Surely it is no common-place thing—no mere negation—but an invaluable positive acquirement. "Grace and peace" are often put as the summary of all good; or the latter term, peace, comprehends all that is most to be desired in effect, as grace describes the source or cause.

Peace, in its relation to Christ, or to the work of Christ, denotes primarily our reconciliation to God. "*He* hath made peace by the blood of his cross: He is our peace." In the passage now before us, peace, in its relation to the Spirit, denotes rather something wrought in our minds, an effect of the reconciliation. The one is our state; the other is the feeling or consciousness of our state. How blessed an effect of the Gospel being believed! and, generally, how sure an element in the regenerated nature—whether we understand peace of conscience, or, in a larger

sense, rest and content of mind! Primarily it is in the conscience peace has its seat. It comes of the blood of sprinkling, and by the sprinkling of the blood, to the awakened or alarmed soul. It is the echo within the man of the sentence of justification pronounced without. It is a copy, so to speak, registered in the court of the conscience, of the act of pardon passed in the court of heaven. It is, we have said, no mere negative thing; not the peace of ignorance, but of faith; not the mere absence of concern in one who has never feared: there is a false tranquillity, or "being at ease," to which enlightened reason refuses its warrant, and on which Scripture pronounces a woe. The true peace is not the peace of a conscience that has never been burdened—of an innocent being who has never sinned, or of the presumptuous who judges of himself as if he needed no repentance. But it is the peace of one forgiven—of one who has feared; and often it is greatest where the fear or alarm has been greatest: "He never knew," says the poet, "to hope, who never knew to fear." It is a tranquil sense of acceptance with God that can show a reason for itself. It is the gift of the Saviour, who giveth not as the world giveth. It is the work of his power, as well as the purchase of his blood. It is the kingdom of God—with righteousness—attesting the reign of the Prince of peace within, by the presence of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Happy fruit of the reconciliation—pledge and earnest of heaven! How justly put as another word for happiness! For, beginning in the conscience, it "keeps also the heart and mind through Christ Jesus!" (Phil. iv. 7.)

And so we may not restrict peace to justification as the ground on which it rests. Coming of a believer's adoption as well as justification, nay, of sanctification as well as either, it is that satisfaction of soul which can point as its warrant not only to the blood of atonement, but to the covenant sealed with that blood: it is the natural concomitant of a sure interest in all the promises of a reconciled Father's love, and of a consciousness of begun and progressive conformity to that Father's will. Happy, indeed!—at peace with his God, the spiritual man is at peace with himself: he is at peace with all holy beings: his soul is in harmony with the harmonies of creation: he lives, he walks as in a Father's world; sees God in everything, tastes God in every mercy. Everything was cursed to him before; everything is blessed to him now. Heaven shines more radiant; earth looks greener, fairer to his eye. The sun beams on him unreluctant; the trees and flowers give forth their sweetness without a grudge. The grandest, the most formidable of nature's elements—there is nothing in them to alarm. As surely as in the rainbow spanning the heavens, he sees the token of a covenant of peace—even so, in the thunder, he hears his Father's voice, but the still small voice. The everlasting arm that guides the lightning is the arm that is underneath him—the beasts of the field are at peace with him—the stones of the field are in league with him.—And especially with his brother man, he who is first reconciled to God is at peace:—The word peace includes the meaning, doubtless, of peaceable, "easy to be reconciled," declared elsewhere to be an attribute of the wisdom that is

from above. Glory to God joins with peace on earth, and good will to men. The good man reflects this union. How can he but love much, who has been forgiven much? So, love, in our text, while including love to God, is most surely also love to our neighbour—our brother—to the household of faith—to all men: not a love to their sins—not a love that fails to reprove for sin; but a love of benevolence to the very worst—to enemies, as well as special love to good men.

And appropriately, accordingly, do we find here, not love only, but “gentleness, long-suffering, and goodness,” by the side of peace, or peaceableness. Reasoning even from earthly analogies—whom do you expect to be most considerate of his neighbour, most forbearing, most forgiving? Is it not the man who is satisfied from himself—who is content at heart? not the man who is fretful and ill at ease;—either filled with self-reproach, or discontented with the allotments of Providence? You would not, if desiring another’s favour, go to a man in the moment of his discontent to urge your suit. You approach him with greater confidence in the hour of his prosperity and gratitude. You expect of him that, when jubilant amidst his own successes, he will prove open-hearted—large-hearted—to his fellows. Can it be, then, that he, whose heart is at rest in God,—his conscience pacified, his soul satisfied,—shall be other than peaceful, loving, generous, to his fellow-creatures?—long-suffering, slow to anger—like as his Father in heaven is?—“good” to all: the “goodness” here meaning not inoffensive only, but beneficent, “ready to distribute, willing to communicate.”

Finally, if faith here, besides the faith of Christ, includes fidelity, as seems likely, from the place it holds in this description of the Spirit's fruit—fidelity, honour in all transactions; where should this be found so surely, so naturally, as in the soul that rests in Christ, that has God for its portion? What is left to be desired, especially what to be basely coveted, by him to whom it is said, "All things are yours?" In riches, or in poverty, he has sufficiency. In prosperous or adverse fortune, abounding or suffering lack, he either has God in all, or all in God. While permitted, yea bound, to provide things honest in the sight of all men, he, the heir of God, need take no anxious thought for to-morrow, far less need defraud his brother or go beyond. This were not only to belie his faith; it were to cross his nature, and grieve the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in him.

APPLICATION.—The subject has been so largely practical, it will be enough to suggest a few thoughts, in the review, as inferential lessons.

1. If the grace of the Spirit, distinct as He is from the Son, is yet of the Son meritoriously, how evidently is union to Christ by faith essential to sanctification as well as to justification! It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that makes us free from the law of sin and death (Rom. viii. 2). "We are saved," Paul says again, by "the washing of regeneration shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus iii. 6).

2. If all spiritual graces imply a supernatural source, let us be careful not to confound with these the partial

ameliorations of character which too many mistake for grace. The water can rise no higher than its source: the tree must be made good ere the fruit shall be good. Ye must be born again!

3. If graces may be unequally developed, to the Christian's loss, and to the derogating from the effect of his example, our efforts should specially be directed to growth and amendment in those points in which our Christianity is defective. It is not enough to believe in the Holy Ghost generally, nor to have received the Holy Ghost to general saving effect; surely we ought to cherish the communion of the Spirit, by faith and prayer and watchfulness, in reference to what in our character is most lacking or weak. "He is given to them that ask," says Christ—"Your Father in heaven shall give the Holy Spirit." This is to be still putting on the new man.

4. If the influence of the truth through the Spirit is so moralising as well as comforting to the individual man, and influential through him upon others, how valuable must needs be the Gospel to society also! How precious the Scripture element in any schemes of human education, from which we would expect large moral results! No power but that of the Spirit of God can regenerate human nature: whatever may be allowed as to certain restraints on human passion, or a certain degree of social amelioration by means affecting the outward habits, nothing assuredly will go to the root of the evil, nor influence internally and permanently depraved man, but God's appointed instrumentalities. Let other influences have their praise: but how far mere intellectual culture will secure moral

amelioration, let Greece and Rome, let India and China witness! "The world by wisdom knew not God. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching" to effectuate what the wise of this world failed, if they indeed ever seriously aimed, to accomplish, for raising the mass of humanity from degradation. It is the truth that sanctifies—with the truth and by it does the Almighty Spirit operate: "Received ye the Spirit," demands the Apostle, "by the law, or (not rather) by the hearing of faith?" His question is an appeal with confidence.

Would we, then, see men not only loving God, but one another;—would we see society adorned with the amenities of life;—would we see the breath of social intercourse sweetened by what is gentle in temper, and speech, and act, not humane only: see here that this adorning of life and of man comes of that Gospel being known and believed, of which the Psalmist says,—when replying to the question, *Wherewithal shall a young man purify his way?*—"By giving heed thereto according to thy word." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

VIII.

PECULIAR OR HIGHER PRIVILEGES OF BELIEVERS.

"Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God ; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."—2 COR. i. 21, 22.

THE religion of the believer is not a thing possessed by him as an uncertainty. He is able to give a reason of the hope which is in him, though with meekness and fear. "The sceptic may wrangle, and the mocker may blaspheme, but he knows that his confidence is not misplaced, by an evidence that, to their minds, is indeed incomprehensible, but to his own, is overwhelming, irresistible, and divine." How beautifully is this sentiment expressed by the apostle in the preceding verses!—"As God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea," that is, sure, infallible, and to be depended on. For (says he) "all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." And the like character of stability that belongs to the word of God, belongs also to his works, especially his work of grace in the soul. It is God's work, and it is worthy of him. It speaks for itself, or is mani-

fested by a peculiar and indubitable evidence, so that the Christian, when his faith is in proper exercise, or when the Spirit of God shines upon the grace of His own implanting in the soul, is enabled to say in triumph, as one resting upon a Divine foundation—"He who stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

Let us consider the Christian's privileges here described, in the order in which they are mentioned in the text:—

I. "He who stablisheth us with you in Christ," says the apostle, that is, establisheth us and you in Christ, is God. This supposes, as you may see, union to Christ by faith, for that is the beginning of the enjoyment of every new covenant privilege.

It is when we unite with him that we are justified, adopted, and sanctified; the last blessing being ours in part as soon as we are united to him, and our growth in sanctification being promoted by influences derived from him as the head of the body—the church.

Our justification is perfect at once. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Their perfect freedom from condemnation is founded on Christ's perfect righteousness, which, once imputed to us, remains on us for ever. We are stablished in him as to the ground of our peace, firmly and immoveably, so that though, as to the comfortable knowledge of his interest in Christ, there may be a variety in the Christian's case and frame, his *state* in Christ remains always the same.

But the *stablishment* may be understood in reference to sanctification as well as justification. He is introduced by union to Jesus, into communion with him, in all the fullness of his grace. He receives the sanctifying Spirit by degrees only, it is true; but as the grace of holiness is purchased for him by the blood of Christ, it is sure to him; and, laid up in Jesus as his head, it cannot be lost. It is not committed to his own keeping. He receives it as he needs it. But the promises of God provide surely and infallibly for its seasonable communication. Believers are the "preserved in Christ Jesus." They have access by faith into the grace wherein they stand; and by the intercession of Christ, and the seasonable supply of the Spirit, they are enabled to be active in the life of faith, and in the exercise of holiness. They are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. They are strengthened in the Lord, and enabled to walk up and down in his name.

II. "Anointed us," says the apostle: one of the most honourable and most valuable of the Christian's privileges. It marks strongly, also, his union to Christ, and conformity to him. The name Christ, we ought to know, signifies anointed. The name Christian denotes that believers also are anointed. How? By the same Spirit with which Christ was anointed. To him, he was given without measure—to them, in measure. On his head, as the great High Priest, it was poured copiously, as on Aaron's of old, running down to the skirts of his garments: On them sprinkled, as the other, the common priests, were sprinkled. "God, even thy God (it is said of the Redeemer), hath

anointed thee with the oil of gladness 'above thy fellows." "Ye have," says an apostle to Christians generally, "an unction from the Holy One whereby ye know all things."

Now, what purpose did the anointing of Christ serve? It served to mark him the appointed and approved Saviour. It also qualified him for his great work, in replenishing his human nature with all needful gifts and graces. It made him joyful, for it was the oil of gladness. It adorned him, and made him to shine in all the beauties of holiness. It perfumed the garments of his human nature, according to that beautiful address to the Messiah in the 45th Psalm—

"Of aloes, myrrh, and cassia,
A smell thy garments had."

In other words: having descended from heaven to earth, and clothed thyself with the vestments of a human nature; yet so enriched with all heavenly graces was the holy humanity thou didst assume, that the God was easily discernible by the spiritual beholder in the man Christ Jesus; the only begotten of the Father was beheld among us, full of grace and truth. Oil, even in its common use, beautified the countenance, and it is a suitable emblem of health, and of vigour, and of excellence; but the holy oil of anointing was peculiar, it was reserved for sacred use; the Israelites were forbidden to compound anything like it. A happy symbol this of Christ's pre-eminence in all things, and also, as regards the fellowship of his people with him, of their peculiar character and privileges. On the chosen and called alone is the Spirit bestowed; in the peculiar people only are the blessed effects of his presence visible:

and how wonderful are these effects, and how incapable of being produced by any other cause or agency! Grace makes their faces to shine in some resemblance to Jesus. Grace imparts to them a spiritual and heavenly fragrance. It softens and subdues, and yet strengthens them. As the oil of gladness, it diffuses an inward peace and joy. As precious eye salve, it illuminates their understandings, enabling them, as by a new sense, to apprehend spiritual things.

This last idea seems very particularly to be intended. For, the believer's establishment in Christ had just been mentioned; and we learn elsewhere, (1 John ii. 27), that on the anointing of the Spirit, as the means of their supernatural and effectual illumination, the stability of Christians depends. "The anointing which ye have received of him," says the apostle John, "abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." This was the apostle's confidence with respect to those believers, at a time when great endeavours were made to seduce them from the faith. *The anointing abideth.* Once instructed by divine and effectual grace, the power of the truth continues for ever to be felt. The mind never altogether loses the savour of spiritual things. Its convictions can never be totally eradicated. How vain, accordingly, all the efforts of earth and hell to overturn the confidence, or extinguish the love, of the heaven-born and devout soul! The Christian, weak in himself—the unlettered Christian, little capable of giving a reply to every cavil of

the unbeliever, still,—though he may lose the battle of argument, loses not his hold of the truth. He knows it is no lie. He experiences its influence deep in his soul. All the engines of infidelity are insufficient to counterwork the work of God.

III. A privilege closely connected with these others is the *sealing* of believers: "Who hath also sealed us," says our text. As the Holy Spirit is the unction, or the anointing, so he is also the seal, according to that statement in the epistle to the Ephesians, (1st chapter), "After that ye believed in Christ, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

Some refer the *sealing* to one distinct operation of the Spirit, others to his presence and inhabitation in general. The meaning of the expression may be so far collected from the phrases immediately preceding and following, as well as from the common uses of a seal among men. The Apostle is setting forth the ample security of the Christian's great interest, as being established in Christ, anointed; and, in very natural connection with this, he adds, "sealed," and that to the day of redemption. Just as men seal, by way of securing and authenticating, property and deeds, so does God, by the Spirit, seal his people—set them apart—distinguish them from others—and make evident to themselves, as in part also to those around them, their peculiar character, and distinguished happiness. It is not inconsistent to understand this, more generally, of all that communion of the Holy Ghost which the Christian enjoys by faith, and also, more strictly, of certain of His higher opera-

tions; for, even by his illuminating, and quickening, and sanctifying influences, as well as by his comforting presence, does he distinguish those who are Christ's, and spiritual, from those who are of the world, and sensual, *not having the Spirit*. The Apostle Peter, in vindicating the common right and privilege of Gentiles with Jews, selects this, accordingly, as the grand point in which true believers among either are made to differ from the rest of mankind, (Acts xv. 8), "God bare them witness, *giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us*; and put no difference between us and them, *purifying their hearts by faith*."

The Apostle Paul, again, says, "*After ye believed, ye were sealed*:" which warrants us, in a strict sense, to apply the term to the work of the Spirit, not so as to include the work of faith; and it is clear, indeed, that, to the Christian's own comfort and assurance he is not sealed till after he has believed. He must be a Christian before he discerns in himself the marks or tokens of a Christian. Still, however, faith itself is just one of these marks, or tokens; and, even in the very production or infusion of this first principle of the spiritual life, has that Divine agent been stamping him with the impression and character of a child and heir of heaven—the mark and token of God. By the first, as well as by the ulterior operations of the Spirit, is he sealed *really*: it is after the Holy Ghost has taken up a gracious abode in the heart, and manifested His presence to his consciousness, that he is sealed *formally*, or to his comfort. More strictly, then, may we understand the term before us, not of the work of the Spirit generally, but of the light he casts on his work; not

of setting the mark of God upon the believer, but, at some seasons, making that mark more distinctly legible, and enabling the Christian, beyond all doubt and uncertainty, to understand and to feel it.

The sealing of believers, like their anointing, has been happily illustrated by reference to the Saviour, of whom it is said, "Him hath God the Father sealed." The sealing of Christ was the communication to him of the Spirit in all his fulness, and the evidence thereby given to the Son of the presence and approval of the Father who sent him. He bore the proper impress of heaven's great Ambassador. Men were inexcusable in not discovering it. The consciences of many, even among his enemies, witnessed to it. He was justified in the Spirit. He was declared to be the Son of God by the Spirit of Holiness.

So does He manifest the justification, the adoption, the election to eternal life, of all his people, even by giving them of the same Spirit. "Hereby we know that we dwell in God, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

I might here show, as in truth these very passages demonstrate, that the Holy Ghost is given to be present with believers, not only in his influences, but by a mysterious personal inhabitation. How high the honour! How wonderful that grace which it manifests! But the idea specially before us is, that by that blessed Spirit they are set apart for God, and by Him they are assured of being so set apart.

It may be asked, Do we not thus confound the anointing

and the sealing of Christians together, since we understand both of the Spirit? We answer, Of Him both must be understood; but not to the confounding or blending them with one another. He is considered under different views; and it only argues the excellency of his gifts and graces, that no one representation sufficiently characterises the benefits believers have by his presence. They are anointed by him, to denote more peculiarly his light, and effectual teaching, and their spiritual beauty and fragrance, as adorned and sanctified by his graces. They are *sealed*, to denote His witness and their security.

IV. Still, as following out the same ideas, and as making them somewhat more complete, it is added, "And given the earnest of the Spirit in our heart." "He is the earnest," says the apostle to the Ephesians, "of our inheritance;" not only the seal, marking us for the inheritance, our token for heaven, but Himself the earnest, in that our fellowship of the Holy Ghost, and our experience of his light, love, and joy, is the very beginning of heaven. It is implied that the Christian's happiness is chiefly future; but something of heaven is to be enjoyed on earth. What a sublime view does this give us of the Christian's privilege, even while here below! And how does it go to show that God is indeed willing that the heirs of promise should have abundant consolation; that they should not lack the clear knowledge of their destined happiness—the joys of full assurance!

And here, again, what is said is both capable of being understood of the Spirit's grace and operations more

generally, and of a certain peculiar enjoyment of the communion of the Holy Ghost more particularly.

For, even the man who is comparatively a stranger to the joys and triumphs of the Christian life, to those near and realising views of God and of glory, which may be compared to the grapes of Eshcol, or the sight from Pisgah of the promised land, yet, if an intelligent Christian, is warranted to regard that flame of divine love, which is lighted up in his breast, as the commencement of that love to God of which the saints in glory shall for ever be full, and which, as experienced by the happy souls in Paradise, will be one principal part of their everlasting heavenly bliss. Surely their purity of conscience and heart is just that perfect conformity to the Godhead begun, which, in a higher degree, will be the perfection of their nature, and their highest honour and ornament. Their pleasure in good works is allied to that—a pleasure of the same kind with that—which shall be felt in doing the will of their Father in heaven, in His more immediate presence. He who is living to God has begun to live in heaven. He has the foretastes of the feast above in his communion of love and obedience below. But, the first-fruits of the Spirit enjoyed in more blessed moments, given, however rarely, to many of the overcomers by faith, even during the days of their pilgrimage,—given to them as their choice refreshments, their oil and wine after their battles and victories,—given as the dainties of heaven, in the banqueting-house of the ordinances, to serious and spiritual worshippers; when the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them; when faith is already turned into sight, and

their joy is made to abound as a river, yea, as a river overflowing its banks;—in such moments of spiritual communion as those, in which Christians have been known to cry out, “Lord stay thy hand,” unable to bear more of the weight of that glory which our natures must be perfectly changed to bear in its entirety: Surely these especially constitute the earnest of the inheritance given them; not only heaven in hope, or even in the assurance of hope, but heaven in enjoyment,—a joy unspeakable, and full of glory—of the same kind with, and only inferior in degree to, the highest delights of the church triumphant!

IMPROVEMENT.—I congratulate Christians on such choice privileges—such honourable distinctions. Happy, indeed, is the people that is in such a case as this!

What remains but that I call on Christians to take the comfort of it? Deny not the grace of God. Do not, by unbelief, by sloth, or by untenderness of practice, lose the actual enjoyment of the comforts provided for you. Your union to Christ introduces into a blessed communion with him. Rooted and grounded in him, nothing can move you. Taught by the Spirit, no sophistry of the unbeliever need bewilder you. Sealed—marked by God, possessing the token of his favour, why still hang in doubt and fear? and especially if you have been enabled in a manner to read that token, having sometimes obtained the very earnest; why doubt the constancy of God’s love, his faithfulness to his promises, in short, your final welfare?

But I must remind you both of the necessity of cherish-

ing the Spirit, and the danger of grieving, and partially, at least, quenching him. Yes, that Spirit by whom ye are sealed ;—by pride, by covetousness, by carnality, you may grieve him, and forfeit the joys of his presence.

Rather, by active communion with Christ, invite his influences, that you may increase and abound both in your holiness and comfort. Ye are anointed for God—ye are set apart for him. Let it appear that the anointing of your God is upon you—that the holy oil, as of old, is on your ears, your hands, your feet,—by the devotedness of your lives, by your readiness to learn and do in all things the will of God. Be separated from the world lying in wickedness : ye are priests unto God. Draw near to him in all his ordinances ; and especially value that ordinance, now in our near prospect, which God has signally honoured as a sealing ordinance, and where he has often given to the sanctified their most intimate and satisfying communion with himself. And, as you would be sealed there indeed, give yourselves to prayer—earnest prayer, for that Spirit whose work it is, and who is himself the very oil of anointing—the seal, the earnest of heaven.

In fine, earnestly we urge those who have not yet seen their need of receiving the Holy Ghost, nor sought the honour of his abiding with them, no longer to remain satisfied without such a blessed privilege. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” If your chief joys are those of an earthly kind, surely He is not dwelling with you as yet.

Yet, you must have observed how all the saving benefits of Christians are of the Spirit. He is indeed the

great promise of the New Testament, as the promise of Christ was that of the Old ; and, therefore, if strangers to his operations and to his grace, you are strangers to all religion. Every thing is *by* Christ, and *through* the Spirit—our peace, our consolation—in short, our salvation.

Is not your indifference, then, on this subject a melancholy sign ?—and, if any of you feel as if His presence and operation, because an inexplicable mystery, were therefore an absurdity, I warn you of this as an affecting proof that your minds are not brought to the submission and obedience of faith. And let me not conceal from you that till your thoughts, your ideas, your tastes, are thoroughly changed, there is no evidence of your having obtained through mercy the title to the kingdom, or the character of citizens of the kingdom.

But I remind you, ere I close, that you have every encouragement to seek the Spirit. He is the Spirit of promise. He is promised in no sparing terms. He is promised even to the foolish and to the scorner. Only seek—only turn to the Saviour. “Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you ; I will make known my words unto you.” “If ye, being evil, know to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ?” Jesus has ascended to shed him forth ; and “the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Amen.

IX.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN REVIVALS.

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father for so it seemed good in thy sight."—LUKE x. 21.

THE scene here referred to is not the least interesting and instructive in the history of our Saviour. It is one which may justly be recommended to the serious meditation of those whose minds are apt to rise in disgust at the very mention of election, and sovereignty, and distinguishing grace; and who are ready to impute severity or harshness to any who would venture a word in vindication of what they, in the pride of their hearts, spurn away as an unmerciful doctrine. Even were the doctrine unmerciful, they are not to be reckoned unmerciful surely who humbly propound, as an article of faith, what they do feel assured God has revealed; or who reckon that worthy of consideration, and good to the use of edifying, which, in the assertion and illustration of it, they believe to fill so important a place in the sacred volume.

But let them consider with themselves ere they pronounce the doctrine unmerciful. Who is it that speaks *here*? Is it one whose fervent love to the souls of men is

to be doubted—whose heart was devoid of tenderness—or whose yoke was grievous and burdensome? And how speaks He? what is the subject of the Saviour's thoughts at the time? It is just this doctrine of God's discriminating or sovereign grace, in the enlightening and saving of some, and the passing by of others! And speaks He in the style of one hardly consenting to the doctrine, expostulating with God the Father, or even grieving that the decree of God was unalterable? No: it is in the language of humble and profound adoration—of acquiescence in the will of the Father and Lord of all, as necessarily holy and good in all its determinations; nay, it is with more than acquiescence, it is with thanksgiving and joy. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit." He rejoiced; and said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." O yes! even while his bowels yearned towards a perishing world, and a little afterwards He looked on the infatuated city and wept over it, yet it not only reconciles Him, if so I may speak, to the appointed course of things, but it yields Him relief, satisfaction, and joy, to contemplate the will of God as the ultimate rule and reason of the distinction made: it is enough that so it hath pleased God; it is a righteous thing that God should be glorified, though sinners should not universally be saved. He knew that not only must the judgment of God be according to truth in the condemnation of any, but, moreover, that it is fitting that the grace of the Most High should be exercised freely in the dispensation of the gifts of mercy. The sovereign will of God not only is, but ought to be, and with trustful contentment as well as reverence is to be acknow-

ledged to be, the sole cause why the Divine benignity is extended to some and not to others in the one common mass of a sinful and guilty race ; or, why one is chosen and another left. Some may inquire how this is to be reconciled with Christ's weeping over the lost. We reply, that the tenderness of his human sympathy enhances the value of that homage which he renders to sovereignty, while it proves the consistency of the faith of this sublime truth with the most ardent concern for the welfare of mankind. Christ, as man, loved all men, delighted in the happiness of all, grieved in the misery of all. He had not otherwise been a holy man, obedient to the law of love. But, while He thus commiserated with human sympathy the ruin of those whom He knew to be reprobates, yet in submitting this human affection to the all-wise decree of God, He only manifested the entire holiness of his nature.

There is no doctrine so revolting to human pride as that of the absolute sovereignty of the Divine will—none more opposed by the enmity of the human heart, and so slowly consented to by the yet unhumiliated sinner. It is, however, in this attribute lies the peculiar glory of God ; it is the most brilliant pearl in the crown of Heaven. And no wonder that the sinner's contest should be with this mainly : it is as acting from Himself alone, as the only cause, and to his glory as the only ultimate end, that He claims to be God, "of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things ;" and it is in this that He is removed to the farthest distance from all rivalry and imitation. The will of no creature is or ought to be uncontrollable by causes external to itself ; and it is the highest dignity to

which it ought to aspire, to be under the entire control of God, and to move in harmony with his law; but on this very account—that sovereignty is the grand distinguishing difference between God and the creature—does the rebellious creature spurn at it. He will acknowledge both justice and mercy to be in God; but it is the hardest of all lessons to acknowledge, as the ultimate rule of what we are to do and to practise and to believe, that so it hath pleased Him.

And yet as the acknowledgment of this was the very joy of the Saviour's heart, so it has the assent of all pure and perfect spirits. Election may be denied on earth, but it is confessed in heaven. "Thou hast redeemed us out of all nations," is their untiring theme of wonder! "Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!" And it is with no hesitating response—it is with loud voice—that the ten thousand times ten thousand angels, and thousands of thousands exclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,"—and again, "Amen! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever."

In leading your attention to this subject, on which, if on any, we stand in peculiar need of the leading of the blessed Spirit, I would,

I. Shortly define the term sovereignty, especially in its relation to the justice and grace of God.

II. Show how, in its most absolute sense, sovereignty is manifested not only in the scheme of grace in general, but in all its unfoldings; and in the salvation of individuals as well as of the mass of the elect.

I. I believe that much mistake on this subject arises from confounding the free self-determining will of God with arbitrary and capricious acting. But no such imperfection or weakness can belong to one of infinite excellence. Holiness, wisdom, truth, and mercy, belong to the great Ruler of all, no less than power. His will therefore, though limited by nothing without Himself, is, if we may so say, limited by his justice and wisdom; or rather, is never exercised but in full harmony with all his moral perfections. The apostle, while representing to the Ephesians the absolute freeness of the grace of God, says (i. 5-9, 11, 12), "He hath predestinated us according to the good *pleasure of his will*, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;" "wherein," he adds, "He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence;" and again, "having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself;" and again, "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; that we should be to the praise of his glory." The inspired apostle speaks, you see, largely of grace, and of the purpose of God's good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; but he speaks of Him who worketh all things in wisdom, and to the best end, *after the counsel of his own will*. It is not without counsel, but it is counsel with himself. For *who hath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been his counsellor?* God

never acts without a wise end, though he may not disclose that end to us further than that we surely know, of all his procedure, that it accomplishes the manifestation of his glory; and to us it is not the needful defence of what He wills that the thing is seen by us to be wise; it is the proof that it is wise that He wills it.

Neither is the sovereignty of God ever exercised at the expense of justice. The righteous Lord cannot but love righteousness, and cannot but do righteously. I know that on the subject of election and reprobation this is the perfection that is most apt to be arraigned by the pride of man; but we may ask boldly, while looking at what may be accounted the severer instances of his government, Are not His ways equal? Were we to say that God is the author of sin, we should indeed give occasion to the objector to take offence. And in the coarse way in which the objections to Divine sovereignty are often stated, this seems to be taken for granted, even that God creates many men to damn them. But let not the creature become a false accuser of his Creator: God cannot tempt any man to evil. However, then, it is to be acknowledged that sin is in the world by Divine permission; and while we hold that the sovereignty of God is manifested even in choosing to permit moral evil; on this the Scripture is express, that by man did sin enter: "By one man sin entered into the world." And, however unable we may be to reconcile this with the holiness of God, assuredly it is only of a holy and wise permission we are to understand whatever passages seem to connect the sin of moral and rational agents with any causal influence on the part of the Creator. Thus

when our Saviour here recognises the Divine sovereignty in hiding the gospel from the wise and prudent, while it is revealed unto babes, we should err were we to consider him as meaning that God directly causes the blindness of unbelievers. Wherever He is said to visit men with a spirit of blindness or strong delusion, it is not in mere sovereignty, but in righteous judgment.

Sovereignty, however, as well as judgment, is concerned in such dispensations thus far; that, while He might, if he pleased, reveal the truth to those from whom he hides it, he does not will to interpose in the gracious and saving manifestation of himself to every sinner. That is, in other words, he is sovereign in the exercise of his mercy; not arbitrary, however, but righteous, in his retributive judgments. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes: Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

This leads me to observe, that sovereignty in respect of sinners of the human race is chiefly displayed in the exercise of His mercy and grace: And that it is not with God's mercy as with his justice, that the exercise of it must be uniform and invariable. God must be just; He is just to all: But it is a presumption altogether unwarranted, to suppose that God must be merciful to all; I mean merciful in pardoning and saving every sinful and miserable creature. He declares otherwise. He said to Moses, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." Thus is the grand distinction between these two attributes of the Divine nature clearly indicated. You never hear Jehovah speak-

ing thus of his justice. He never says, "I will be just to whom I will be just." But though he cannot, as the judge of the earth, do but what is right, he claims to show mercy on whom he pleaseth. God forbid I should hide the mercy of God, or conceal his goodness! We know he is rich in mercy, ready to forgive; yea, we know that it is a great part of the glory of God to forgive. I go farther; I hold that in the perfect freeness and sovereignty of the Divine mercy is found the very best refuge of the sinner. For, if the mercy of God were not sovereign, or He not sovereign in the exercise of it, the sinner who *most needs* mercy might most despair of it. It is the glory of God that he can be merciful, to the very greatest sinner, as well as to the least. There is this comfort hidden in the declaration, I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. Enough that God wills it. It does not go by the rule or principle of human merit at all; and therefore if God has promised, as we are sure he has, that the chief of sinners who believeth on his Son, shall be saved, the chief of sinners needs not despair; yea, may certainly believe that God will forgive him, since he has said he *will*, and his will is ever exercised in harmony with his faithfulness. For we are not claiming for Jehovah, under the plea of vindicating his sovereignty, a power of dispensing with his promises. But what we affirm is that, except by his word and gracious promise, he is not obliged to exercise compassion to the sinner. Therefore his words, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious," while they speak blessed comfort to the sinner who flees to the provided refuge, rebuke at the same time the presumption that God must provide a re-

fuge to every one who is guilty, or a help for every self-ruined one. The glory of his justice requires that sin be punished. He who passed by and proclaimed his name, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious," declared he would "by no means clear the guilty." So truly is this principle acted upon; that, wherever mercy is extended at all, it is only on the basis or through the medium of satisfaction rendered to Divine justice. Now, as it was entirely of himself to provide that satisfaction by a Surety, so it rests with himself to apply the benefit of it. To how many, or to how few, is a question only to be determined by himself.

And here it is that sovereignty is very specially concerned. God will manifest his goodness in such a way as shall not only be glorifying to his justice, but illustrative of his absolute and uncontrollable right to give or withhold his favour as seemeth good to him. It is striking to observe that, even in answering favourably Moses' prayer, who imploringly asked (Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19), "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," He said indeed, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee;" but added, as defining its exercise, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy:" as if the glory of God were not sufficiently seen in his dispensations of goodness, but when that goodness is seen to be exercised in his mere good pleasure; given or withheld in no consideration of the relative merits of the elect on the one hand, or reprobates on the other, but because "so it hath pleased him."

Many of the objections to the doctrine of sovereignty

would vanish, were it kept in mind that the decree of Election does not merely contemplate mankind as *such*, but as *sinners*; not men absolutely considered, but sinful men, meriting the wrath of God. This is what in ordinary conversation on the subject is often kept out of sight; but it is what the Bible never fails to keep foremost and prominent. And, this being taken into the account, the whole question, as far as the character of God is affected, assumes a different complexion. It is no longer the case of a supreme arbitrary Being deciding upon the fate of millions of rational creatures, and choosing them to happiness or consigning them to damnation, without rule or reason. It is the case of a Just and Holy Governor of all, contemplating a sinful and lost race of his creatures; and, while the purity of his nature and the honour of his throne rendered retribution necessary; nay, when in strict justice that retribution might have been universally exacted; nevertheless, desiring to glorify his mercy in the salvation of some, yea, many, at the same time that, for the glory of his other attributes, he awards condemnation to the rest. There is here no act of injustice to complain of, but an act of mercy to admire. The murmur must not be that many perish, when all have sinned;—what through eternity will be matter of wonder and praise is that *many are saved*!

Hence, too, a difference may be stated here between the ground of the condemnation of a sinner, and the ground of his reprobation or of his being passed by in distinction from others who obtain mercy. It is of the utmost importance to recollect that it is not sovereignty that is the cause of

condemnation, though election is the cause of salvation. No reason can be given for the salvation of sinners but that so it hath pleased God. It is not so with those who perish; the ground of their condemnation is their sin. Yet, when again you ask, what is the reason why, *when all have sinned*, some perish and others are saved? (that is, not, what is the ground of condemnation, but, what is the reason of any being passed by?) our answer must then refer to sovereignty as well as justice: "So it hath pleased Him!" This is the only solution our Saviour gives here. He refers it to the will of God. He might doubtless have said, that from many these things are hidden, because they love not the truth, or that, being sinners, it is what they deserve, to be left to perish; but, because he is here giving the reason, not of their condemnation, but of some being saved and others passed by, among those who in *common* are sinners, his explanation is, "Even so, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight."

We only add that the same explanation is given by the Apostle to the Romans, in that memorable passage in the 9th chapter of that Epistle, where he is holding discourse of the deep judgments of God. Having shown that all are not Israel who are of Israel, and that the children of the promise are counted for Abraham's seed, not by natural birth, but by grace, he refers back to the words of God to Moses, a little ago quoted; adding, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." And, then, taking up the objection against absolute sovereignty as necessarily leaving the blame of our perdition at the door of God himself, he asks,

“Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” It is observable that he here takes the high ground of absolute sovereignty; not, however, but that the cause of Israel’s condemnation was their own sin, especially unbelief, as he afterwards shows; but when he would say, wherefore God, out of the one sinful mass forms one to be a vessel of mercy, while on another he shows his wrath, as a vessel of wrath, he seeks no other reason, he gives no other explanation, than that “So it hath pleased him.”

II. The whole history of redemption, through all its unfoldings, manifests free and sovereign grace. I confine myself, in the present discourse, to the displays of God’s sovereignty *in the salvation of men*; though it were easy to show that Creation and Providence, so full of the illustration of the wisdom and goodness of God, abound also with satisfactory testimony to His absolute dominion. Creation! to what can it be attributed but to the will of God? He was under no necessity to give being to any creature: “Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” Providence! the whole scheme of the Divine government in heaven and on earth, is just the development of the counsel of the Lord. Even a heathen king could say (Dan. iv. 35), “I blessed the Most High—he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none

can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?" "Our God is in the heavens," says an inspired song, "He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Ps. cxv. 3). "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in the heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places." Paul preached at Athens the sovereignty of God in the allotments of the time of life, and place in the world, of each individual: "He hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of our habitation."

But as the absolute sovereignty of God, as instanced in the dispensations of grace, is most affecting, so the proof of it is most ample. It is one grand object of the revelations, both of Old Testament and of New, to make it manifest. Grace! grace! is the constant theme—free, unsolicited, undeserved mercy, in opposition to every claim or pretension of human merit—*sovereign* grace, in opposition to any compulsion or necessity on the part of the Giver, or any supposed ground of preference in one guilty creature as compared with another!—This, the whole history of redemption, in its contrivance, accomplishment, and application, commends to our humble faith, and our grateful admiration.

1. The salvation of men, not of angels, illustrates it. That a Saviour was provided for sinners at all, was of the love of God, or his mere mercy: "Herein God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus iii. 5). Thus do we see *grace* asserted in opposition to all human merit. But lest any

one should think that while Divine grace thus provided or the salvation of the guilty, it could not possibly have been otherwise; behold the same gracious God passing by a nobler race than that of man, and fixing his regards upon an inferior rebel family! "Verily, he took not upon him the nature of angels, but he took hold of the seed of Abraham" (Heb. ii. 16). Those sons of God, those morning stars, are suffered to go into everlasting darkness, while worms of the dust no less vile morally, far inferior intellectually, are exalted to the dignity of children, and inherit all things.

But then, among the human race themselves, look at the distinction again! "He showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation" (Ps. cxlvii. 19). Wherefore this distinction? can it be referred to merit? can it be traced even to a comparative merit? So far from this, the Jews were a nation singularly perverse and foolish. They were foreknown by Jehovah as a people who would deal treacherously: "I knew," says he, "that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb" (Isa. xlviii. 8). "They did worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before them:" so testifies the sacred historian (2 Chron. xxxiii. 9). When God set his love upon them, he saw in them no moral beauty; nay, rather pollution, as well as helplessness: "Thou wast cast out in the open field to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born," says Jehovah by his prophet (Ezek. xvi. 5). It was not that they were better than other nations in their *origin*. Lest they should think so,

He addresses them thus: "Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite." It was not for their *virtuousness* they were singled out from among the nations: "Not for thy righteousness, says Moses, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go in to possess their land;" and he adds what strikingly illustrates our position a little ago stated, "for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee;" election being held forth as the sole cause of Israel's salvation and blessedness, but the destruction of the Canaanites as no less a demonstration of justice than of sovereignty. In fine, as little can we refer the distinction to their *number* or *greatness* as a people: "The Lord did not set his love upon you," says Moses, "nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers" (Deut. vii. 7, 8). The faithfulness of Jehovah, or his adherence to his word of promise, is introduced as explaining his wondrous interpositions in behalf of Israel: but his gratuitous love is the cause or spring to which the promise itself must be traced up; for there is no promise of God, which mercy was not as much concerned in the making as truth in the fulfilling. "He loved you because he loved you," is the short sum of the matter.

It might be shown, too, how, in the forbearance of God with that people of Israel, and his returning to them in the manifestations of his favour and reviving presence after seasons of controversy with them for their sins,

sovereign mercy still appears in a most affecting manner. See in proof of this Isaiah lvii. 17, 18: Thus he speaks of Israel, "I have seen his ways and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners." One would think, to hear such a promise, that it must be meant that Israel had so amended their ways, as that Jehovah could again return with favour without injury to his glory; but how stands the fact? The preceding words are (ver. 17), "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart." No amendment—yea, progress in declension! yet in this very connection occur the words, "I have seen his ways, and will heal him." Let us not mistake. It surely is not meant that, without reformation and independently of it, the tokens of Jehovah's complacency could be realised to the full. Reformation must, in the order of things, precede the external blessings promised; and hence these are often represented as hingeing upon national righteousness: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the fruit of the land" (Isa. i. 19). But let it not be forgotten, nor the proof we are referring to be unobserved, that the very reformation of national manners is itself a fruit and manifestation of grace; and that the healing of the people takes rank among the unmerited and unsolicited gifts of sovereign love: "I have seen his ways, and will heal him!"

The twentieth and thirty-sixth chapters of Ezekiel may be consulted for illustrations of the same thing: "I wrought for my name's sake, not according to your wicked

ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

Now, Israel was typical, in its election by God, of the election of grace everywhere; and although the choice of that nation *as a nation* is irrevocable—and their preservation to this day is a proof that the gifts and calling of God, in this respect also, are without repentance—yet the apostle reasons that the particular and individual election, both of Jews and Gentiles, is that chiefly in which this great national election terminates. There existed all along, as he shows, this special gracious election of individuals as distinguished from the nation in general. God had reserved to himself, out of that people, seven thousand men, in the days of Elias: "And even so," he concludes, "at the present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

How striking is the display of grace and sovereignty in the families of the patriarchs! We might go back to the earliest of them. In the family of Adam himself we see a distinction made—Abel accepted, and Cain passed by! Faith, indeed, constituted the grand point of difference; but what is faith but a gift of God? Again, special favour rests on the line of Seth. But his descendants sink into degeneracy. Then Noah found "grace" in the eyes of the Lord. Again, in the family of Noah, the line of Shem is chosen. It was long after, that God was to persuade Japheth. In the family or line of Shem, at length permitted to lapse into idolatry, mercy rests upon Abraham. He is singled out from amidst an idolatrous world—himself, for aught that appears, an idolater. What peculiar,

yea infinite, favour, bestowed upon him for no other reason but that so it pleased God! "Who raised up the righteous man from the East, called him to His foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? Who hath wrought and done it? I the Lord, the first and the last; I am He" (Isa. xli. 2). Again, in the family of Abraham, see Ishmael passed by, and Isaac chosen: "My covenant will I establish with Isaac."

But of all early examples, the case of Isaac's family sets in the most impressive light the Divine grace and sovereignty. This is the apostle's chosen illustration. Jacob and Esau, twin children of common parents; the same mother as well as the same father; of one birth as well as one womb; enjoying the like advantages of religious culture—behold, of these one is loved of God, the other hated! that is, passed by—hated comparatively—not loved with the same peculiar favour as he—HATED, not as a creature, but as a sinful creature: "For the children, being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger."

In immediate connection with this illustration the sacred writer introduces the mention of Pharaoh (Rom. ix. 17). In him God would show his power and make his name known. In His holy and sovereign dispensation He hardened his heart; or, if it is thought safer so to express it, permitted Pharaoh to harden his own heart, and to become the victim of his guilty obduracy; mercy not interposing to dispel his illusion or to prevent the judg-

ments which he provoked from taking their course upon the haughty oppressor. "So then," reasons the apostle, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. *For* the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this purpose have I raised thee up," — "Angels must be here," says one, speaking of the sovereignty of God's dispensations, "to show the reach of God's sovereignty to heaven. So, as extending to the highest and most glorious among men and angels, Beelzebub and Pharaoh must be here!"*

But, in every case of conversion or revival, the same fact holds. It is not in the consideration of the moral worth or the excellency otherwise, of any individuals, that we are to find the reason of their salvation: it is in God's sovereign appointment. And that the will of the creature is as little the cause of salvation as the merit of the creature, what a proof have we in Saul of Tarsus, in Lydia, in the members of the Corinthian Church! Saul, exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the Jews, and furious in his opposition to the cause of the gospel, becomes a thankful, humble, vessel of mercy, and zealous preacher of the faith he had destroyed. See too in what circumstances he was chosen—on his way to Damascus, in company with others embarked in the same impious design, but himself the very ringleader of the band! It is he who is "the chosen vessel!" Him the voice of Christ addresses. The others, less guilty it would seem, hear a voice, but see not who speaks. They are amazed, but Saul is converted. "It pleased God," says he, (no wonder he thus speaks!) "who separated me from my

* Blackwell's Sacred Scheme.

mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me" (Gal. i. 15, 16). "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you:" says the apostle to these reclaimed ones; "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi.)

On the same principle we may perceive that the subjects of conversion still are in many cases the most unlikely persons; or, when a day of divine power is experienced, let it not appear surprising that you behold or hear of scoffing infidels receiving the humbling truths of the gospel with obedient minds. God chooses some of such, the more to impress us that all is according to his purpose. He reveals these things to babes, persons illiterate it may be, comparatively foolish, very simple ones: "Even so, Father, because it seemed good in thy sight." The wise man glorying in his wisdom may stand by amazed or incredulous: the thing revealed to others may be hidden to him. There is partly justice and judgment in this, it is true; God thus punishes human presumption: "For judgment am I come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." But let us not view it as an act of judgment alone: it is mercy, mere mercy, which chose the one; it is in sovereignty, pure sovereignty, that God, who could, did not choose the other: "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and

things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor. i. 26-28).

Sovereignty appears in the choosing of the *places* where He is pleased to manifest the power of his grace. The apostles or ministers of the word are directed to go to one people or country, and forbidden to go to another. Just as, for a long period, "He showed his word unto Jacob," and as the preachers of Christ and of his kingdom were not at once permitted to go "into the way of the Gentiles;" so again the Gentiles, despised by the Jews, are chosen to inherit the blessing when Israel is in righteous judgment "blinded:" "the diminishing of the one" becomes "the riches" of the other. Again, among the Gentiles, in one city rather than another, the apostles are appointed to labour, the Lord having "people there." Mark how the suggestions of the sovereign Spirit of God overrule the purposes of Paul and his companions: "When they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit," says the sacred historian, "suffered them not!" (Acts xvi. 6, 7). Asia (proconsular) indeed afterwards received the word—the time to favour it came. Meanwhile, the appointed season for its entrance into Europe had arrived; and Paul obeys the signal to pass into Macedonia.

Further: sovereignty appears in the *means* and instrumentality by which conversion or revival is accomplished. It is ever the word which God honours, but it may not

always be the likeliest exhibition of that word. The man of eloquence may be blessed, and has been blessed ; but the simple statement of the truth of God, in unostentatious style, may prove the weapon of greater power. It has often been so from the beginning. It is so still. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit." "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water ; but it is God alone that giveth the increase." And, that no man may glory, not the same word only, but also ministered by the same person, is the power of God to one, and falls ineffectual on another. Under the ministry of Paul himself, "Some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not" (Acts xxviii. 24). "The wind of the Spirit bloweth where it listeth."

To humble the pride of man, too, it has sometimes happened that the same individual minister, blessed to gain many souls to Christ *in one place*, has proved himself comparatively fruitless in *another*. The celebrated Livingstone, so successful in his ministrations at Shotts, found himself without sense of his Master's presence, and almost without power of utterance, when ministering elsewhere some time after. It is said of Dr. Stewart of Dingwall, that he perceived little or no effect of his preaching the same kind of doctrine at Dingwall, which God had owned so much at Moulin.

And when I speak of doctrine, I must add that, even as we have already shown, that sovereignty is never exercised at the expense of justice ; so, although God does bless sometimes an imperfect ministration of his word, and, it may be, at the same time or in the same place, may seem to honour with success those who differ in sentiment on

certain articles of the faith, as well as differ in their mode of stating the truths in which they agree; this is no proof, nor ever ought to be so interpreted, that soundness in the faith is of little importance. We are to beware of deducing sweeping conclusions from scanty premises. God may bless the fidelity of an Episcopalian, without setting His seal to Episcopacy: but I must not, in forming my estimate of the truth or error of the system of Episcopacy, look to the blessing attending a faithful minister here and there; I must look at its workings on the whole, and, above all, compare its pretensions with the Scriptures. God may bless an Arminian. I believe, some who conceal or deny the very doctrine I now preach—that of divine sovereignty—have done good: but I cannot compute the harm they have done. And I think it probable that they might have effected tenfold more good, had they declared the whole counsel of God. I the rather touch on this point, because of the sensitive jealousy of some, lest the exhibition of the doctrine of election should prove a hinderance to conversion, by stumbling and discouraging those who may happen to misunderstand it. Away with such time-serving policy! If God may sometimes bless those who in ignorance withhold this doctrine, I believe He will frown upon those who thus advisedly dissemble or keep back his counsel. Are we wiser than God? No doubt, the doctrine requires to be handled with caution; but, I know too, it may be preached so as to prove consolatory and confirming to the saints of God, and a means of awakening and stimulating sinners. I am happy to add here the testimony of that good man, Mr. Robert Hal-

dane; who, speaking of some partial revival on the continent of Europe a few years ago, says, "There was nothing brought under the consideration of the students of divinity who attended me at Geneva, which appeared to contribute so effectually to overthrow their false system of religion, founded on philosophy and vain deceit, as the sublime view of the majesty of God presented in the concluding verses of the 11th chapter of Romans, ending thus, 'Of him, and through him, and to him are all things'—Here God is described as his own last end in everything that he does. Judging of God as such an one as themselves, they were at first startled at the idea, that He must love himself supremely, infinitely more than the whole universe, and, consequently, must prefer His own glory to everything besides. But when they were reminded that God, in reality, is infinitely more amiable and more valuable than the whole creation, and that, consequently, if he views things as they really are, He must regard himself as infinitely worthy of being more valued and loved, they saw that this truth was incontrovertible."

The *time* of conversion and revival manifests sovereignty: The time, I mean, both of its occurrence, and, in the case of a revival, of its continuance. It is true of the individual believer, that the spiritual comfort or grace which he seeks may not be bestowed at the time expected. It may be delayed till hope deferred maketh the heart sick. So also the prayers of churches may be so long in being answered, that when the answer comes they may be like men that dreamed. A good and eminent minister of God has been found to labour long in his place in the vineyard with

little success, though with much prayer: Another has scarcely begun the work when a full reward is given into his bosom: Again, while means are being plied by the same individual with equal industry, or, it may be, greater, Christ may seem to have withdrawn himself and to be gone.

As regards conversion, the time of its occurrence has often been not the least impressive proof to the individual that the mercy of God is exercised sovereignly. Not only has the scoffer become the subject of converting grace, but sometimes in the very scene of his contemptuous manifestations. It was thus, if we may credit history, in the experience of some individuals, who went, in past periods of revival, to scoff at the word which was to be addressed to assembled multitudes, but were apprehended of Divine grace, and became the willing captives of the Saviour they despised. What more expressive instance, indeed, than Paul's conversion on the way to Damascus? The furious persecutor might, if it had so pleased God, have been made to yield to the sceptre of the Lord Jesus before. His journey to Damascus might have been prevented; his very plans anticipated: but it is not till he is in the midst of their execution that mercy arrests him.

Surely the very first of our practical reflections on all this ought to be—What gratitude, what unbounded gratitude and praise, is due to God, from those to whom He has given reason humbly to feel assured that grace has triumphed through righteousness in their salvation! that a boon so unspeakable, withheld from many, is conferred on *them*, not more deserving!

Our very next reflection may well be—What humility becomes them! for “who maketh thee to differ?” Let pride be for ever far from the vessels of mercy; neither let any, under the garb of humility, of professed humility, judge hardly of God, or his mercy, as being too sparingly manifested through a scheme which does not effectually secure the salvation of all men and all angels. Remember that salvation is not the only end, nay, we are justified in saying, it is not the chief end of the scheme of Providence. God’s ultimate end in all his counsels is his own glory. He doth all things for himself; nor can He who is infinite do otherwise.

What an affecting view does the whole subject present of man’s dependence, and of Jehovah’s supremacy! How does the creature appear nothing, and God all in all! And yet is not this the fitting station for the creature to occupy in the presence of the Creator—the worm of a day, before the Eternal? “What is man, that God should be mindful of him? Behold, all nations are before him as nothing; yea, less than nothing, and vanity!” Is it fitting then, that in the arrangements of *infinite* wisdom, or in the dispensation of an *infinite* bounty, the fancied merits of any creature should be of serious account? Who can define the rights of the creature but He who made it? What rights has the sinful creature? Is it not the due homage to the Almighty that man should feel and confess his dependence? Pride, a desire to be independent of God and his will, has been the spring of all misery. It is the purpose of God to hide pride from man; to subdue this towering spirit of self-sufficiency; and to bring him to see that,

as the glory of God is the creature's chief end, so the will of the Creator should be his **only** ultimate rule. Nor does this end of all the Divine dispensations subserve more surely the vindication of the rights of Jehovah than the interest and well-being of man himself. It is when most abased before the Lord ; it is when most brought off from self-dependence ; it is when most denied to his own wisdom, his own righteousness, and his own strength ; and clinging the most to God as his stay, his hope, his portion ; it is when seeing himself to be nothing, his interests and his glory utterly insignificant, as viewed apart from the glory of God ; it is then man is most truly blessed. By pride came destruction ; and by humility is the pathway to honour again.

But while the appropriate use of the whole subject is to lead us to see that God is in all things to be glorified, it is necessary to guard against the practical abuse of the doctrine : and the explanations which have been given may enable us to see how ill-grounded are those prejudices which are taken at the Divine sovereignty, or the pleas founded on it, whether to extenuate an indolent neglect of the means of salvation, or a heartless despondency and distrust. It is not indeed for us to pretend to clear up the dark mystery of God's ways. He giveth not account of His matters. If all were plain and intelligible to the human mind, the Apostle had not exclaimed, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God !" But though we cannot fathom the depths of the Divine purposes, we may remove some of the adventitious difficulties which owe their existence to human misconception.

First of all, sin is of man, not of God. In vain we seek to charge it upon our Creator: He disclaims it. Our consciences pronounce in accordance with this; they accuse and condemn us; and men accuse and condemn one another. If our wills are not free to choose the good till they are made free, it is sin that has bound and enslaved them. Let this be remembered.

And again, the grace of God in the manner of its operation, or the decree in the manner of its accomplishment, harmonises with our rational nature. It does no violence to our real liberty. It neither supersedes the exercise of reason and understanding, nor the habits of attention, and least of all, our duty of obedience to the calls and commands of God that are addressed to us.

And this leads to the remark, that it is the invitations, the promises, the precepts of Scripture, that constitute our rule of duty and warrant of faith and hope. It is with these, not with the decree and purpose of God, that we have, in the first instance, to do. Not that the decree is to be disbelieved, nor the doctrine of the decree to be concealed; but it is all-important to bear in mind, that the invitations to faith in Christ are addressed to us freely and particularly, and, beyond all doubt, sincerely and ingenuously; and it is not for us to neglect compliance with these in a dependence on the promised aids of grace, on any pretence of our ignorance of God's purposes. The secret purposes of God, we may rest assured, will ever be found to be in harmony with his revealed purposes; and the word, the very oath of God, makes it certain that he

that cometh shall not be cast out. And let this give heart to the preacher. The deplorable opposition of men to the word of salvation need not discourage him who believes that the ministry of reconciliation is the divinely appointed method of bringing men to God; and with which the grace of the Spirit may be expected to be concurrent to the effect of bowing the sinner's will by an influence as welcome as irresistible. The decree may give confidence; for the sovereignty of that decree, while it calls for a humble reference of the whole effect of his ministrations to the Divine purpose, assures him, at the same time, that wherever God has a people, no resistance from hell or earth shall hinder their conversion; nay, their own hard and obdurate wills shall yield; and though not against their consent, yet without their previous preparation, and independently of their merits, the most degraded captives of Satan may become willing in a day of the Redeemer's power. Of course, diligent preparation in waiting on God belongs to our duty, and is indispensable. But, often is God found of them who sought him not. His ways are not our ways.

Again, the sovereignty of God is misunderstood, when Christians are supposed to have any reason in this doctrine for relaxing in their watchfulness against sin. On the contrary, it supplies an urgent motive to Christian diligence. Holiness is the evidence of faith, as faith is the evidence of election.* Whom God has foreknown he has predestinated to be *conformed to the image of his Son*. This is the end of God's electing purpose; and, just in so far as they discern the evidences of this progressive confor-

mation, can the heirs of promise be assured of their happy interest in the everlasting covenant. It is not the doctrine of our dependence on sovereign grace which teaches men to be content with a low standard of duty; it is rather that which, presuming on human power and sufficiency, is driven to bring down the rule, to meet and accommodate the offers of self-sufficient righteousness. He who believes that his salvation is according to God's eternal purpose and love, will find himself urged by the very thought of such a cause and origin of the work, to attribute corresponding importance and magnitude to the work itself! The fruits of righteousness *he* looks for are such as are worthy of the eternal design, and of the Divine agency, to which he refers and attributes every step of his sanctification. Hear the apostle adducing this consideration as a motive to diligence, not an excuse for indolence: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 12.) Nor does he allow of any evidence of conversion as satisfactory but what demonstrates the great power of the Divine Spirit. "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God," (1 Thess. i. 4,) says he to the Thessalonians; and it is followed up by this: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

In fine, while the decree of sovereignty requires, in order to our assurance, such decisive tests of the good work of God in us, what stability does it impart to our consolation and hope, when we are enabled to trace to such a lasting and unchangeable source our spiritual experience, instead

of having to regard our religion as dependent on our unstable and capricious will ! He who hath begun the good work will perfect it. The foundation of the Lord standeth sure.

In truth, the habit of reflection on the sovereignty of God is calculated to inspire the Christian with peace and comfort amidst all the changes and trials of his present state. It is the part of a wise man, as in reference to salvation, so in discharge of the ordinary duties of time, to be active and conscientious, knowing that the care and blessing of the Almighty are not promised to indolence and to imprudence : But if, at the post of duty, vexations await us ; if disappointments which sagacity could not foresee, and industry could not prevent, thwart our honest plans ; we shall find, in the consideration of the Divine purposes and counsels, no small relief to our hearts, in being able to recognise, in the events that befall us, a presiding Will which is ever designing no less wisely and faithfully than powerfully and irresistibly. "The Lord reigneth ; let the earth be glad." (Ps. xcvii.) "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." (Rom. viii. 28.)

X.

ETERNAL ELECTION NO DISCOURAGEMENT TO FAITH, AND NO EXCUSE FOR INACTION.

“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.”—2 THESS. ii. 13-17.

THE preceding verses contain one of the plainest predictions of the rise of the Man of Sin, and most striking delineations of the character of that apostasy, to be found in all the Bible. The general consent of Protestant interpreters has referred the passage to the Church of Rome; and its agreement with history as to the manner in which the great antichristian system attained to such formidable influence is certainly confirmatory of this interpretation. It may be observed that the apostle speaks of the subject as one with which the Christians at Thessalonica were familiar, and on which he had discoursed when present with them: “Remember ye not that when I was yet with you, I told you these things; and now ye know what

withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." The prophet Daniel had foretold the rise of the great spiritual usurpation as coincident with the dismemberment of the Roman Empire; and the apostle had no doubt pointed the attention of the Church to so remarkable a prediction, since he supposes those to whom he wrote to understand what was yet the "let" or hinderance to the full development of the apostasy. Rome Pagan—the empire—still stood, of whose dismemberment when it should occur the Papal power was to take advantage. It is in dreadful terms that the havoc this antichristian system should make of men's souls is here described, as well as the diabolical policy by which it should insinuate itself: "Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." It is not necessary, indeed, to take these words and the following—"that they all might be damned," as necessarily importing that every adherent of the Papacy is doomed to certain destruction.* But surely it is a very solemn warning of the danger of wilful departure from the truth; since the apostle at least affirms that, where error works its full effect in enslaving the mind and corrupting the heart, it is indeed deadly or damning. Nor are the fatal consequences the less certain, that in righteous

* The word literally means "judged,"—yet in the sense of "condemned," as our English Version takes it.

judgment a holy God may have permitted the victims of deadly error to be deceived, yea, has "sent them strong delusion that they should believe a lie." For still it is, because they received not the love of the truth, and, first of all, had pleasure in unrighteousness. How relieving it is to find such an awful statement accompanied with so clear a testimony to the certain connection between faith and salvation!—"they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." This implies that salvation is in very deed brought nigh. How relieving it is also to find, along with this prediction of the dismal night of error that was soon to set in upon the church, so distinct an intimation of its destined close also, or of the sure decline of antichristianism, and its destruction in due season:—"that wicked one, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming!"

The apostle, moreover, comforts himself with the assured expectation which he felt warranted to entertain, that faithful witnesses should not be wanting in the darkest time, and that these, his converts at Thessalonica, should stand fast in the hour of temptation. It is well, however, to be warned against even the beginnings of spiritual declension; and it is just when one is contemplating the dismal effects of error in those who have never been truly enlightened, that the most intense gratitude should be felt to a gracious Providence, if it has preserved us from the seducing and corrupting influences which might have proved fatal to us no less than to others. This is the spirit that characterizes the apostle's expressions in the verses we have selected for exposition :

Ver. 13, "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord." He does not so much praise or flatter their constancy, as he gives thanks on their account. But neither does he hesitate to tell the elect of their safety. He speaks of all believers as of that number; all who love the truth are saved. In the beginning of the former epistle he had told his Thessalonian converts how he knew their election of God. It was not by any sight granted to him more than to others of the book of the decrees, or of the names written in the book of life; it was by the reception they had given to the gospel, and the fruits it had produced in their lives. But it is very instructive to observe, that Paul rests his confidence of their final well-being and steadfast preservation on God's unchanging purpose. Nor does he dream of its being unsafe to assure them of their interest in that purpose. We shall see immediately how he guards against an abuse of this doctrine. But mark first, how, so far from concealing his belief of their interest in the decree of love, when he would give expression to his firmest hope of their constancy, it is with this he begins, "Brethren, beloved of the Lord." Such is the designation he applies to them, recognising in this the surest guarantee for their abiding in the faith:—they were interested in that special love or grace which, having eternally chosen them to everlasting life, would not fail to carry on the good work to its consummation. Few passages appear to us more explicit than this, in proving a decree of election, and in demonstrating that the election has been from everlasting; that it respects individuals; that it is free,

uncaused, I mean, by the foresight of the faith or good works of some as compared with others; that it is holy withal, including provision for the sanctification as well as salvation and final happiness of the chosen.

"From the beginning," says the apostle, "he hath chosen you." This is undoubtedly expressive of the eternity of the choice. It was before all time. It is in vain that it has been attempted to give another meaning to the words, as if denoting the beginning of the gospel only: for it is matter of history that the Thessalonians had not received the Gospel from "the beginning," in that sense of the words.* They were later than many others in receiving it. Any reader of "the Acts" may remember that the apostles had largely prosecuted the work of their mission in other parts before they were beckoned to go into Macedonia; and Thessalonica was one of the famous Macedonian churches. Besides, the expression—"from the beginning,"

* The interpretation sought to be forced on the words, "in the beginning,"—though supported by Michaelis, has been rejected on critical grounds, by Schott, Ellicott, Lange, &c. The argument briefly is, that such a sense would require some supplementary expression with *arche* (as in Phil. iv. 15), or obviously involved in the context (as in 1 John ii. 7, 24). See also Dr. Eadie (on Eph. i. 4), who justly marvels at Adam Clarke finding an allusion in the phrase "from the foundation of the world" to the commencement of the Jewish state. Neander trifles with the subject in a like manner. Calvin rightly saw, long ago, that the apostle's object was to comfort the elect in all time, as well as Christians of the earliest age of the Gospel. Indeed no relief is found from the supposed difficulty of those subjects in any theories that suppose a reference merely to a general choice of the Gentiles to the privilege of a Gospel state; for sovereignty must still on this hypothesis be confessed. All nations have not been chosen, and masses of the outwardly called reject the offered salvation. Surely it was not for a thing of so uncertain result that the apostle breaks forth in thanksgivings and blessings so fervent!

has its obvious interpretation in parallel passages where we have the same idea, only in different words. Thus in Eph. i 4, "before the foundation of the world," is the phrase used in the very same relation to electing love: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

Then, further, the election is "to salvation." It is not merely to the opportunities or means for salvation. To these also, no doubt: they are mentioned anon. But salvation itself is here, and here first—the end before the means. For, that final salvation is to be understood, is plain from this, that the salvation is inclusive of "the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" mentioned in next verse, as the end both of the election and of the calling; and because, moreover, it is distinguished from *sanctification* which, though itself a part of the salvation, is here ranked as a means to the complete end,—“through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.”

How interesting to observe the relation among these things! Salvation is first stated comprehensively as the fruit of electing love. But, lest any one should exclaim: Is our safety then irrespective of our holy living?—So essential, says the Apostle, is sanctification, that it is no less provided for, no less certainly related to final glory, than is the belief of the truth: nay, so essential is sanctification, that whatever of salvation is enjoyed in the present life may be comprehended under that very word or

name. And this Gospel holiness is as much deeper and more thorough than any mere virtue of man, as the Divine person who undertakes for it is greater than a mere creature: the love of the Father is carried into effect by "the love of the Spirit."

We seem to miss here "redemption" by the Son. But, besides that "the glory" to be obtained is called the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, I doubt not the word "sanctification" here is to be taken in its largest extent of meaning, including all that the Spirit as the applier of redemption works in the soul, from its first enlightenment in the knowledge of Christ and union with him, to its highest advances in conformity to his image. Redemption, then, or reconciliation by the cross, is implied. And next to sanctification of the Spirit, comes here "belief of the truth:" before it, no doubt, in the order of our experience. As belonging to the external means, it is, in its own place, as essential as the agency of the Holy Ghost. Let no one say, then, If we are so passive in the hands of God, and if salvation, as it would appear, is so independent of us, we may leave ourselves to fate, or wait inactive the will of our sanctifier. No! He who applies redemption—He whose work sanctification is, requires faith as well as inclines us to exercise it. Nor does he pass by the understanding, but acts through the medium of it, presenting the truth to the mind, and enabling us to receive it, and love it:—"through belief of the truth." Not to perceive that truth—by so clear a light does it shine—is represented in the preceding context as the evidence of a heart ill affected to the matter of the truth; and, so, they who

perish are said to perish because "they have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved." Sad doom! But their condemnation, observe, is connected with their sin; and how inscrutable so ever to us the decree which abandons unbelievers to their choice, or leaves them to believe a lie, even these darkest words of the passage or its context imply the most comforting assurance against any mere arbitrary procedure on God's part, or such exercise of absolute sovereignty as might render faith or diligence vain. The election does not take effect but through faith; and none who believes perishes. Effectual calling is the very evidence of electing love; and we need no more than the outward call, the gospel invitation, to warrant faith:—"whereunto he called you by our gospel."

"He called you," and "by our Gospel."

The "calling" is inclusive, doubtless, both of the external and internal or effectual call. The Apostle undoubtedly refers to both in the case of those to whom he was writing—they were such as had believed. But the outward call or invitation had been addressed to them just in common with others. The secret decree of God's love could only be affirmed of them when that outward or common call was complied with. And how expressive of conversion this word "called!" How expressive of the power as well as the sovereignty of grace concerned in that change! He but *calls*; he speaks to the heart—and it is done. "He hath saved us and called us (2 Tim. i.) with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began."

And we learn, too, what is the means or instrument in the hand of the Spirit, in this effectual operation. No doubt, the whole word of truth—law as well as gospel—is of use; but emphatically it is said, “by our Gospel.” This is the great power of God. This it is which moves, draws the soul; convinced and alarmed by the law—but now only sweetly constrained. “Our Gospel”—the gospel which I preach—says Paul: and he leaves us at no uncertainty what this was:—“We preach Christ crucified; to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” In the Gospel is eminently beheld the glory of God in the face of Jesus. There is seen provided the righteousness which the Law requires. There conscience finds the satisfying answer to its question. How shall I come before the Lord? There the balm effectual to heal its wounds. Nor are the promises of the Gospel limited to forgiveness. As free as its offer of grace is its promise of glory, and the attainment of it assured to him who believeth. No partial salvation this, nor uncertain, nor conditional; for, observe, it is “to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ,” we are called. The sacred writer embraces all as possessed by one faith—received on one calling. The very first step on the way of life, once taken, is no surer than the final prize is sure that is yet to be run for and pressed towards. Christ has purchased all; and he gives all or none!

So it is called “His glory,”—that glory transcendant and eternal which He was made perfect through sufferings to bring many sons to enjoy—*His* also, as being in his hand

to be dispensed by him in that day. Who is competent to describe that glory? What tongue of man or angel can describe it? No expectation, nor imagination, surely, can exceed what is not so much described as only indicated by this representation of it: it is the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; a glory which is the reward of the Saviour's merits, and proportional to these; a glory which he has gone into the heavens to receive, and prepare for his people; and which he will give to them to enjoy in fellowship with himself eternally. For, says he, "the glory which thou hast given to me I have given to them." How enhanced the sweetness of the reward, that it is to be enjoyed by believers as joint heirs with Christ; given by Him, the Lord, the righteous Judge, and secured by their mystical union to His very person! The Apostle lingers on the Saviour's name, every letter in which is precious, as connected with so blessed a prospect:—"the glory of our Lord, Jesus, Christ!"

The conclusion of the passage contains an exhortation and a prayer: very suitable both, as following his words of congratulation or thanksgiving. Just as if the final salvation were uncertain, or conditional, he enjoins "standing fast" as a duty; and, knowing that for all duty assisting grace is needful, he commends his converts to that grace.

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast." Yes, he urges as a motive to diligence and steadfastness, the very knowledge of their interest in the divine love on which he had congratulated them. This is ever the way of the sacred writers. The same Apostle who tells us that the founda-

tion of God standeth sure, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are His," adds unhesitatingly as on the obverse, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. ii. 19). Paul does not wait to reconcile these things, or to satisfy every caviller how it can be that the certainty of an interest in the divine love influences the Christian not to abate, but to increase his watchfulness. So John as Paul. He who says (1 Ep. ii. 27), "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you," says again (v. 28), "And now, little children, abide in Him;" and again (2 Ep. v. 8), "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." Both things are true—throughout all Scripture are recognised as true—the adequacy of the provisions of the covenant of grace, or the unconditional nature of the promises, as concerns the end; yet, the necessary relation of the means to the end, or the conditional dependence of one blessing on another, as indispensably anterior to its enjoyment. Sanctification, itself a part of the free salvation, is conditional of the full salvation. Faith, itself a grace, is the prerequisite to ulterior grace. So, perseverance is both a secured privilege and a commanded duty. "Therefore," says the Apostle, "stand fast," not the less that he says elsewhere, "He who stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. i.)

And in order to this standing fast, see how he again commends the word of truth, ever honoured as the means of spiritual life and growth in grace. What is of the spirit

effectually is, our Saviour himself tells us, of the word of God instrumentally:—"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." And the Apostle, like his Master, tells Christians that they are clean through the word as well as through the blood of Christ (Eph. v.) Christ "loved the Church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

"Hold the traditions."—I need scarcely explain that there are no other traditions recognised by Paul than the oral or written words of inspired men: what was afterwards written was yet partly oral. He explains himself—"whether by word or our epistle." The canon being not yet complete in that day, he naturally charges it on these Thessalonians, who had enjoyed his personal ministrations, to have his doctrines in remembrance. The quarrel of Protestants is not with the word "tradition," which signifies what has been delivered to the Church, and committed to it as a sacred deposit to be guarded and handed down from one generation to another. All Scripture is a "tradition" in this good sense. It is unauthorised traditions and uncertain, which we decline; such as have too often been substituted for the word of the living God. And the very command to hold fast the Apostolic tradition, oral once, now written, and well authenticated, is what renders imperative the avoiding the mere commandments of men.

Finally,—the prayer of this passage—how much is it in keeping with the doctrine and with the precept foregoing! The matter of the prayer; how much in few words! the manner, how assured, and how assuring! The apostle

insinuates the ample grounds for expecting the blessings prayed for, in his introduction, or description of the source whence he invokes them. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ, and God, even our Father." He lingers again on the precious names of the Saviour, in this instance mentioned before the Father, as if to remind us that he is no less than the Father, and with the Spirit, the fountain of grace; as well as especially, and so most frequently represented, the channel through which it flows:—"our Lord,"—divine Master; "Jesus," Saviour; "Christ," anointed: No vain tautology, since each name is suggestive of grounds of encouragement in prayer. But, just as the Master himself taught his disciples to comfort themselves with this also, "The Father himself loveth you" (John xvi. 27); so does the apostle add, "and God, even our Father, who hath loved us." And both from what he is, and from what he hath done, he draws the cheering inference as to what he will do: "may he comfort your hearts!" His is the power to reach the heart; no other can soothe it effectually: "and stablish you in every good word and work." Behold here the far-reaching morality of the Gospel! See the help provided for every faithful and obedient disciple! Thus, as the apostle does not the less enjoin the duty of standing fast, that he has just told them of the securities of the covenant; so, not the less does he plead for stablishing grace, that such grace is promised. The promises are our warrant to plead; and the Spirit of adoption teaches Christians to guide themselves by all God's revealed will. Enough for them to know that He will be inquired of for these things to do them for them. They use without gain-

saying the appointed instrumentality; and the blessing comes only sweetened the more, that what was rendered sure by love is seen to be accomplished in faithfulness:—the gift at once of preventing grace, and the fulfilment of prayer!

PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT.—The exposition has nearly anticipated our practical remarks. Yet we would invite attention to certain great lessons to be derived from the passage as a whole.

1. It is very significant how often Paul exemplifies the duty of thanksgiving for distinguishing grace. It is not in the spirit of vain boasting that any one should contemplate the grace that has made him to differ. But neither is it a small matter for congratulation, if mercy hath chosen us. There are some who would take away the praise of virtue by referring to the various lots of individuals, and by supposing what might have been the event had your circumstances and disadvantages been the same as those of others. They think they assign a sufficient reason not only for sympathy with the ignorant or the errorist, but for holding the chances of acceptance with God equal as between men of sound creed and unsound, when they can say: "Had you been born where these were, and trained as they were, you might have thought as they do, and feel as they do. Why value yourselves on a distinction of privilege which as to you has been so accidental?" We would, they would say "Providential," and then the taunt is already half answered. For it is all very well to rebuke the spirit of boasting; the Scripture itself rebukes it, and says, Who maketh thee to differ? But does it follow that

the goodness of Providence is not to be devoutly acknowledged? Does it make truth the less valuable, that the mind that has been privileged to see it must own a divine illumination? And if, by human instrumentalities provided to us without our foresight, and by favourable influences brought to bear on us while yet unconscious of them, our minds were induced to choose the good and avoid the evil, are we less to appreciate the favour of Providence that led us thus in the right way, and preserved us from the paths of the destroyer? The fact, if admitted, that under other circumstances we might have been what others are, is no argument that all circumstances are indifferent, or all creeds alike safe. The apostle does not speak thus. He distinguishes between the truth that saves, and the lie that is damning. He connects the hope of salvation with the belief and love of the truth, and he gives thanks on behalf of those—surely teaching them to be thankful themselves—whom God had chosen, and who by the gospel had been called. Only be sure that you have been brought to know the truth spiritually, and that you are able to give a reason for your faith and your hope; then care not for the taunt,—“you believe just as your fathers and mothers believed.” None the worse surely for your faith, if these loved it before you; and only an additional reason for thanksgiving to God’s preventing goodness, who, purposing your salvation, anticipated your own choice and counsel; and so early familiarised you with the lessons of wisdom, that your decision at length for God and for truth seemed easy, and your very prejudices have seemed to be on virtue’s side. But it is well,

howsoever you derived your convictions, when you can say, like the people of Samaria to her who first guided them to Christ: "Now we believe, not because of your word, but we have heard him ourselves." So, however led by parents, or led by pastors, bless God if you have heard and proved the word to your own content. And to him who would say—"Had you been born among Mahometans, you would have been a Mahometan; had you been trained a Romanist, you might have lived and died a Romanist;" let it be your reply: "Possibly so it might have been; but it is not less cause for my humble gratitude to Him who makes me to differ, that the Bible and not the Koran came into contact with my mind, and that I was trained to know the true traditions of the inspired word of life, and to turn a deaf ear to those inventions of men which might have corrupted my heart, and perilled my soul." Do men less value civilisation because it may be true that, if born in other times or in other circumstances, they might have been contented with what now they would esteem as barbarism? Is liberty the less prized, or is the distinction between freedom and bondage less real, because the degraded vassal of tyranny loves his chains, or in other circumstances might have been as free as we are? Our thanksgiving for distinguishing grace is to include the circumstances of our lot, the means, the appliances, the Providential arrangements, whereby the result on which we congratulate ourselves was brought about. Paul blesses God for electing love! We can do this without despising others, and without extolling ourselves.

2. We see how eternal election, so alarming to many,

may be viewed as a doctrine fraught with comfort. Only know your election; what is this but to know that God loves you, that his covenant is established with you? What a repose to the soul, and what a stimulus to spiritual action, that every gain made in the spiritual life is the development of an eternal purpose of grace!—that every step taken in the spiritual journey is a nearer approach to a blessed consummation infallibly secured! Only let our election be once made sure by our calling; and let our calling be proved by the appropriate tests. And hence,

3. We may observe how different a thing election is, in its connection with life and practice, from what by many it is supposed to be. It is no less an election to holiness than to glory. We cannot know that God hath chosen us or others, apart from the consciousness or perception of the fruits of faith, and progress in sanctification. What a motive here to holy diligence! what an answer to every plea of indolence, or false security, as if once elected and knowing ourselves the elect, we may conclude to live as we list! On the contrary, the value of holy deeds is enhanced by this, that they are proofs indispensable of a title to heaven. Nor, surely, are Christians less likely to love God,—and love is the fulfilling of the law,—when they have once attained to the knowledge that God has first loved them. Surely the certainty, as well as the greatness, of the provisions Divine love is seen to have made for our safety and happiness, must operate by a sufficiently natural and intelligible law to induce a grateful ingenuous obedience.

And we see that the passage just expounded proceeds

on this: "*Therefore*," says the apostle, "stand fast;" just as elsewhere he makes this practical appeal to the hearts of Christians (Col. iii. 12): "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, . . . If any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

4. In its aspect on the inquirer as well as on the man already leading the Christian life, the decree of love has really nothing to discourage. Election is not God's taking one and refusing another, of those who seek, and seek perhaps with like earnestness. So some picture the matter, and others wantonly misrepresent it. Election is the *cause* of any one seeking—it hinders none who seek from finding. So that, as we cannot know our election but by our calling, the very first or incipient desire Godwards and heavenwards is a symptom of the Divine favour for us. The decree bars the access of none who would come, nor does the condemnation of any sinner rest on non-election. The invitation is indefinite to all. Instead of being discouraged because God has not alike loved and chosen all, oh, let it encourage and excite us, that God has loved any of our race whatever, yea, many! and that sure as the connection established between God's plans and their accomplishment, is the connection between faith and salvation, between holiness and heaven, between seeking in earnest and finding! The very sovereignty connected with the freeness of God's choice is calculated to inspire hope into the breast even of the chief of sinners. For, since it is not foreseen faith or holiness that determines

the Divine decree, or is acknowledged as the cause of the Divine choice; seeing that out of a condemned world God saves whom He will, and His decree of salvation is a decree to save by sanctifying; the unsanctified may venture to hope—the most unsanctified need not despair. “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,” silences every claim of comparative merit; but it should equally prevent every feeling of despondency. Jehovah *may* will your salvation, oh sinner; and who shall let it? Nay, take not merely hope, but certainty, from his promise, if only you lay hold on it believingly, penitently. The husbandman may sow and never reap; yet on the general probability of gathering he goes forth, bearing the precious seed. Had you no more ground of hope than he, the part of wisdom would be to seek, to try—to knock at the door of mercy. But you have greater ground of confidence than this: “they that sow to the Spirit” ever reap; “they that seek shall find.” “All that the Father hath given to me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out.”

XI.

WALKING WITH GOD, AND ITS HAPPY ISSUE.*

"And Enoch walked with God : and he was not ; for God took him."

—GEN. v. 24.

"VANITY of vanities !" said the Preacher ; "all is vanity." Nearly the whole of this chapter may be said to be a commentary on that declaration, as applied to human life, and earthly affairs. In how short compass is included all that the Spirit of God has seen it meet to record of the greater part of those patriarchs who lived between Adam and Noah ! Long as was the life of those men, and very long as that of some of them, their birth and their death are here separated only by a few lines. "And he died," is the affecting close of the little narrative of one after another. Even the heavy Methuselah, over whom nine hundred sixty and nine years rolled in long and weary succession, passes from us with this brief memorial, "he died." Was it because their lives were so unprofitably spent, that nothing was judged to be worthy of record ? Or was it because, in their times, no important addition was made to the stock of revealed truth—no further light thrown on the designs

* Preached in Glasgow, on Oct. 14, 1827, on occasion of the death of the author's father, the Rev. William Willis.

of mercy, obscurely intimated in the first promise, and unfolded by subsequent events, which were therefore judged more deserving of a place in the sacred history? Whatever may have been the reason, we are sure, at least, it was not because during those successive generations there was wanting a like variety of incidents, a like mixture of good and evil, to that which chequers the life of men now. Enos and Cainan, Jared and Methuselah, had their pleasures and their pains, their joys and their griefs, just as Abraham and Jacob had. They had their active days, and the days when they leaned on the staff, and sat at the door of the tent. Once the cultivators of the ground, they at length looked on, as others handled the implements they could no longer wield. They married and gave in marriage, they built and they planted, they sowed and they gathered, they reared altars, and slew sacrifices. But when gone by, how short does their long day appear! What a little portion of the line of time does it fill up! "Their love, and their hatred, and their envy, are now perished, neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun." The short sum is this: they were born—they lived a while—they died.

But who is this of whom the sacred historian speaks in somewhat different terms?—whose character is recorded as well as the fact that he lived. It is Enoch, the seventh from Adam, one who, though subject to a like vicissitude of lot with the rest, death excepted, rose above them all in piety; and whose example as well as name shall be held in everlasting remembrance. By him the lessons of

religion which Adam had taught his children had been treasured up with still greater care than the lessons of husbandry : and, at the termination of his course on earth, the review of the whole, alas ! in most cases presenting little that is valuable, presented in his, little but what was truly so. Religion had been the object, not of his occasional thoughts, but of his supreme attention and desire, Not a few days at the end of his life had he remembered his Creator : his remembrance of the Lord gave the leading colour to the line of his history, so that everything else is sunk in the recollection that "he walked with God."

Honourable attestation ! infinitely more honourable than if it had stood recorded that he had associated with princes, or himself had conquered kingdoms. It pleased God to distinguish with his singular favour, at the close of his pilgrimage, the man who had so honoured Him throughout its duration. "He was not ; for God took him." "He was not found," says the writer to the Hebrews. The expression in the text may denote removal from the earth by death or otherwise. "Joseph is not : " "Rachel weeping for her children, because they are not." Enoch, though he may be said to have departed this life, died not, in the ordinary sense of the term. His body was changed, doubtless, as the bodies of those are to be who shall remain on the earth to the time of the resurrection. But, while yet united to his soul, it was gloriously translated to the mansions of the blessed above. This was a rare and happy lot. It was the lot of this individual alone, and one other besides. Yet it is only in the manner and circumstances of the change, that these stand distinguished

from other saints. To die safely and happily, is nearly the same as not to die at all. Our blessed Lord has emphatically said, "He that believeth in me shall never die." And how often, when the believer has been one who has walked with God for a length of time, are the painful circumstances of death so mitigated as to render it something like a translation—so peaceful—so joyful—so triumphant! I say often, not always: and I speak concerning such as have walked with God eminently, and for a length of time: For there is a kind of religion, that cannot be expected to lead to such a happy issue. Some die safely who die not with comfort. Would we wish to have this last for our lot, let us study well that sort of life and character with which this high and honourable privilege is so generally connected.

I would then, looking for the Divine blessing, consider, in the first place, In what walking with God consists: and, secondly, Commend it to you by various considerations, and especially, by its happy influence on the circumstances of a believer's death.

I. Let us inquire what it is to walk with God.

I would regard it as including true faith in God, distinguished fellowship with him, and devoted obedience to his authority.

The idea of *fellowship* is that which the word most naturally suggests: but, as two cannot walk together, except they be agreed, fellowship supposes *friendship*. Now, there is no way of coming to the Father but by the Son. God is reconciled to us in him only, and it is when we are

inclined by the Holy Spirit to rest on Him alone that we can feel ourselves at peace with Heaven. He it is who has "made peace by the blood of his cross." Accordingly, the apostle mentions Enoch among those worthies who obtained a good report *through faith*. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." "But," adds the apostle, "without faith it is impossible to please him." Thus we see that, even in the case of the patriarchs, faith in God through the coming Messiah, was the grand first principle of all acceptable religion. The sacrifices which they were accustomed to offer were a constant monitor of sin, and of the necessity of a mediator: and had they not found peace of conscience in the believing expectation of that sacrifice by which in the end of the world Christ should put sin away, there could have been no happy fellowship with God for *them*. They must have lived and died under that spirit of bondage, that slavish fear of the Almighty, which renders the unreconciled sinner averse to the thoughts of God, and induces him to drown, if possible, all reflection upon eternity.

It is of great moment to have distinct ideas of saving faith. In the man who walks with God, it is another sort of thing than that vague and general belief of the Scriptures in which, it is to be feared, too many rest satisfied. It is generally preceded by a deep conviction of sin, sometimes by great alarm and agitation; the awakened sinner being made to exclaim, like the jailor at Philippi, "What

shall I do to be saved?" Though it renders the man willing to know the whole mind of the Lord, yet it terminates especially on Christ and the doctrines that more immediately respect his person and work. It includes in it a persuasion of his ability and willingness to save, and, along with a persuasion of this, an actual relying upon Him and the promises of the Gospel as given us in him. Hence it is that faith is sometimes spoken of as a receiving of Christ. And, in truth, however, it may be conceded that, metaphysically speaking, the faith which is unto salvation is the same act of mind that is denoted by believing in its ordinary and uniform import; we do well never to lose sight of that distinctive character which, as a grace of the Holy Ghost, the Scriptures assign to it. There it is with great frequency exhibited as taking a peculiar character from its source, its object, and its effects: so that there is a mysterious and spiritual union formed between Christ and every believer—a union so intimate that in virtue of it, Christ is said to be in believers, and they in him. To the reality of this union the Scriptures largely bear testimony: and without it there is no communion. "*I will come into him and sup with him*"—"Abide in me and I in you." And why is it that the mystery of communion with Christ is so little valued, but because this mystery of the union with him is so little considered? But, search the records of those men who have been distinguished for fellowship with God—take their sense of this matter. Why, the union of which I speak they considered to lie at the foundation of everything: and such a faith as does not receive Christ into

the soul, to dwell there by his Spirit, they considered as no faith at all.

As agreeing with this, we may notice how the writer to the Hebrews speaks of faith, in that chapter to which I have already referred as containing the record of the worthies of former times. "Faith," says he, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is the substance of them—it brings spiritual and eternal things near—gives them a presence, a substance, a convincing evidence in the mind, so that they are seen to be important and momentous beyond all others. And to a like purpose are the words of John, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

I am the more particular in urging these views, because much of the soul's comfort depends on them; and to loose or inaccurate conceptions on this subject may be ascribed that want of spiritual enjoyment in life, and that want of assurance in death, which many amiable professing Christians have so often to deplore.

In the *second* place, walking with God, includes habitual fellowship with God, consequent upon this faith in him.

To those in whom deep convictions of sin have led the way to a peaceful reliance on the promises of the Gospel, it is not wonderful that religion should appear the principal end and business of their lives. They who have not that convincing impression of spiritual things which true faith implies, may regard as fanaticism the following hard after God: but, on the part of believers, there is a blessed traffic carried on with heaven, which yields the most certain and glorious returns. While many say, "Who

will show us any good?" their prayer is, "Lord, lift on us the light of thy countenance"—"the desire of our souls is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee." Read the experience of David,—read the Song of Solomon,—and learn there that God deals familiarly with men! And if some in every age, encouraged by these delineations of true godliness, have made it a principal aim of their lives to experience much of the gracious presence of Christ—if, not contenting themselves with superficial views and attainments in religion, they have longed to be brought into the banqueting-house, and to behold the glory of the Lord; have sought to come near to a reconciled God, and to have the joyful experience of feeling Him coming near to their souls—if they have exulted in the near access and delightful communion; or have mourned when the God in whom was all their desire, has seemed to cover the face of his throne with a cloud, or, in the language of the Song, when their "beloved has withdrawn Himself, and has gone"—call it not enthusiasm! Let God be true, and every man a liar. There *is* such a fellowship,—there *are* these views of the glory of the Lord—there is the stirring of the gracious affections, and the melting of the soul, and the joy unspeakable, and the heavenly transport. And, on the other hand, there is the withdrawing, the cloud as well as the sunshine, the painful experience of deadness, and darkness, and distance. If there is sometimes the blessed satisfaction, "Lord, it is good for us to be here;" there is, too, the mournful cry, "Bring my soul out of prison." If there is the boast in God, there is also the complaint, "Lord, how long!—O God, my soul is cast down in me."

In this various experience, lies much of what is properly termed "walking with God." And let it not be thought that this is a kind of religion which may do for the closet of the man who lives retired from the bustle of the world, but is not practicable to other men. I say not that every true believer has equal opportunity of holding high converse with Heaven, in meditation and prayer. Often sincere Christians are contented with scanty measures of spiritual enjoyment; and the consequences are mournful; but it is a vain plea that there is not time or place. God is not confined to temples made with hands. It is not only in the hours sacred to devotion that the Christian realises it: It may be on the road as well as in the closet. The most striking experience of this kind that ever I read of, was that of an eminent Christian to whom God appeared when he was on a journey, and accomplished the promise, "I will manifest myself unto him;" accomplished it in such a signal and overpowering manner, that he ever afterwards thought of that as a day of heaven, illustrating to him what God is, and what are his riches in glory, more than all his former reading, and study, and prayer. But ordinarily, it is just in the diligent use of the word, and in a diligent waiting on instituted ordinances, public, private, and secret, according to our opportunity, that this fellowship is to be maintained, and the seals of the Divine love enjoyed. Of these ordinances it is that the believer says, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." "Tell me," says the church, addressing herself to Christ, "O thou whom my soul

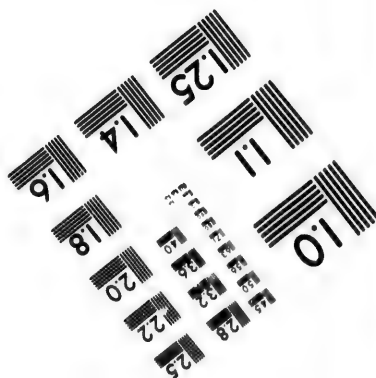
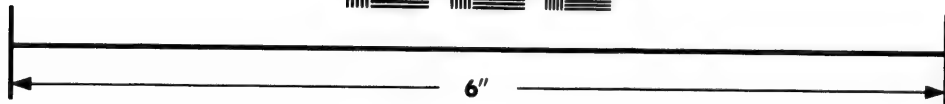
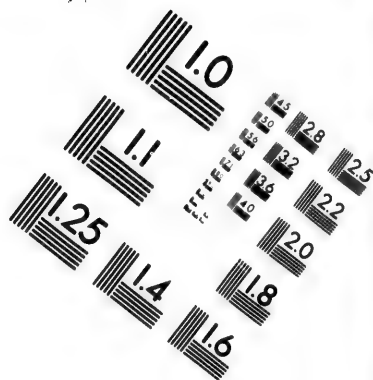
loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon : for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" The reply is, "If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents." Ask the Christian, where he has met with Christ, where he has walked in communion with him? "In yonder church, or in yonder ground," will he say, "while I listened to the tidings of the Gospel, or while I joined in the songs of Zion : O how my heart was enlarged ! how my affections were moved ! how my spirit rejoiced in God my Saviour !" or "yonder, at the communion table, I was brought into the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love. Nay, in that little room, where I met with those men of prayer, and as I bowed the knee along with them, how my soul was wafted to heaven, and my eyes moistened with tears !" Ah, the joy of those tears, and the delights of that spiritual elevation ! "Nay, yonder also," says the Christian, "as I walked by the way and was sad, Jesus drew nigh to me, as to the two disciples of old, and opened to me the Scriptures. While I mused on the words of life, and on the hopes of heaven, he gave me to see a glory in these subjects I never saw before." "I found Him whom my soul loveth : I held him, and would not let him go."

But, *thirdly*, walking with God, includes unreserved devotedness to him.

It is a great mistake to think of that spiritual enjoyment which is found in communion with God, as if it were not of practical value in its influence on the heart and the

life. It cannot be that a man may be much in the Divine presence, and not take on something of the Divine likeness? No; true converse with God has invariably a sanctifying effect. In the communications of men with one another, how great is the influence on each which their converse reciprocally produces! "Evil communications corrupt good manners—He that walketh with wise men shall be wise." Oh then, though our goodness extendeth not to God, yet, on the other part, how can the person who is much with Him fail of being the most devoted in holy obedience? There are views and feelings that come into operation in the believing and renewed soul, to which the mere formalist, and the mere moralist, are strangers—views and feelings whose tendency it is to make the Christian most jealously watchful against sin, not only against outward acts of sin, but even the thought and the purpose of it. The impression which he has of the evil of all sin, as opposed to the holy nature and will of God; his very experience of its effects, in interrupting that communion with Heaven which he values above all earthly enjoyments; his desire to abound in the fruits of faith, and to keep his evidences clear: these are habitual feelings and desires with the renewed man; and these, converse with God is calculated to strengthen and confirm.

Accordingly, when we look to the Scripture saints, or to the recorded experience of those who have walked with God, in later times; we find them as much exercised unto practical godliness as to comforting fellowship. Of what kind are those longings after his Almighty Father and



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Friend which David so often pours forth from his ardent heart? Does he long for the peace of God only? Does he not long also after purity?—Is it not the same man who says, “A day in thy courts is better than a thousand” who cries also, “Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults”? Are his lamentations after an absent God more affecting than his mournful acknowledgments of indwelling sin, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned”?—The truth is, the more the light of heaven shines into the mind; and the more the love of God is felt in the heart; the more clearly does the Christian discern remaining evil, and the more sensibly does he feel and bewail it. While the mere moralist is happy, if his outward life is on the whole pure; the humble and contrite one, in having to tax himself with wandering thoughts, languid zeal, or abated vigilance against evil—feels that he has sufficient occasion for renewing his errand to the throne, and his resolutions to follow holiness. “I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love—Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.”

Behold here one of the mysteries of the life of grace!—a mystery in the eyes of the man that knoweth not these things,—that the more the Christian is assured of his interest in the new and everlasting covenant, instead of being the less humble and watchful, he is just the more so. Gratitude and love, the sure accompaniments of faith, are the motives of his obedience: and every augmentation of privilege brings with it an increased sense of obligation. So much is this the case, that a man who cares about the

letter only of the Divine law, and about pleasing men—were he to read the charges which the believer often brings against himself, in his dealings with his God, and his own heart, as they are to be seen in the recorded experience of the Scripture saints, or others—would be perplexed to know what all this meaneth; and would conclude, were there no other evidence before him, that, of a truth, these men must have been either very bad or very hypocritical. Is it not Paul who exclaims, “The law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin: for that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I”? Was Paul then a loose liver?—the man who, when he spoke of the earthly-minded and the voluptuous, spoke weeping, and characterised them as enemies of the cross of Christ—he who could say, in humble yet confident appeal to the Thessalonians, among whom he had conversed, “Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.” And again to others, “I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel”? And so, in the experience and aims of later Christians, how much warring against corruption! how much contrition! how much abhorrence of themselves! what prayers! what resolutions! what vows! what readiness to ascribe spiritual discomfort as well as outward chastening to their own sinfulness, and to acknowledge that God afflicts less than their iniquities deserve! Walking with God, in short, comprehends this as an important part of it—a regard to His commandments—a conscientious regard, as helped of God, to the greatest and also to the least of them. “I

will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved."

II. I come now, as proposed, to commend to you walking with God, by various considerations.

I might speak of it as the highest honour.—If to have conversed with kings is counted a matter of boast, how much more has he, to whom it is given to converse with his Maker, cause of rejoicing! As much as Moses was honoured above the rest of the Israelites, in being called up to the mountain and receiving directly from Jehovah the message which was to be conveyed to them, so much is that man honoured above his brethren whom God is pleased to distinguish with these high manifestations of his favour. With him is the "secret of the Lord." His it is "to eat of the hidden manna:" his is the "new name which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." While yet in the wilderness, he tastes of the grapes of Eshcol, and sees from afar the good and the pleasant land. Would you then seek the truest honour, seek ye this: It was man's chief honour in paradise—it will be the very glory of heaven—to walk with God.

I may commend it to you as a source of pleasure—a pleasure in its nature pure, sublime, substantial, imperishable. What compared with this are the pleasures of the worldling, and of the sensualist? They are a canker that wasteth, a serpent that biteth—a little while, and they who have set their hearts on these will mourn that their gods are lost, and that their flesh and their body are consumed. Here is a wine that cheers without intoxicating,

pleasure that satiates without tiring, gain that enriches without becoming a snare. Nor think that when a man sets his heart upon those spiritual enjoyments that are to be found in fellowship with God, he must debar himself from the innocent enjoyments of this world: these he will use with increased relish, though with sanctified moderation. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." It is altogether a mistake that the religious man must necessarily be melancholy. Look to the reason of the thing: Who should be so happy as the favourite of heaven, the man who has fellowship with his Maker, who uses present comforts, sweetened by the Divine blessing, as the earnest of more undecaying enjoyments in another state; the man who thinks of his God with peace, and looks forward into eternity with triumph? And look to the fact—Have not the best Christians, the closest walkers with God, acknowledged that the pleasures of creation, and the bounties of Providence, were never to them so productive of enjoyment, as after they have been brought into friendship with the great Creator and bountiful Giver Himself? The mercies which before were tasteless, have now a charm of a peculiar kind, when God is seen in all, and felt in all. "Come and see," is the joyful language of the Christian. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good"!

But I would, chiefly, recommend the cultivation of that spiritual and experimental religion of which I have been speaking, as having a most happy influence in preparing us for comfortable dying. Nothing—nothing will support the mind in the prospect of dissolution, but true vital godliness.

I am not speaking, at present, of extreme cases or exceptions. I speak not of death-bed conversions, which, without doubt, sometimes occur. But we speak of what is to be expected, and what we are warranted to expect; and I would impress it on your minds that, however we may be satisfied with superficial views of religion and superficial attainments, while we are looking as from a distance to that great change which awaits us,—only well-founded confidence in Christ, and that evinced and proved by some experience of the peace and joy and purity that are to be found in walking with God, will prepare us for relinquishing the world without regret, and entering on the new and untried scene beyond it without terror.

The contrast is hardly greater between the death of the careless sinner, and the believer in Jesus who though late has come to him; than between the death of the late convert, and the man who has long proved the armour with which he is called to contend against the last enemy. Well it is, we know that even the grain of saving faith will neither be lost nor rejected: and let us never forget that in every case, as well of him who has lived the nearest to God, as of the late repenting prodigal, it is the righteousness of Christ alone that justifieth: it is not the experience of either: No; neither in whole nor in part does this come into reckoning on the great point of justification or acceptance: But ah! what a difference in point of comfort and of evidence! How fearful is death still to him who has been little trained to the exercises and the joys of heaven! How loath is he to quit the world who is yet little weaned from it! and to whom the question is

still occurring and again occurring; What if my faith is not true? what if my love is not genuine? and what if after all death is to convey me to outer darkness? I trust I have come to Christ, but assuredly I have not walked with him.—I would hope I am depending on his grace, but it is true, at least, I have little prized his friendship!—Compare him with the man who feels himself, as he approaches the borders of eternity, approaching to those objects round which his heart has long been entwined, and with which all his tastes and feelings have become congenial—who has long counted heaven his home, and this world a strange land, a howling wilderness—who, while his trust is only and wholly in the merits of the Redeemer, has this evidence that his faith is true, that he has felt, and felt often, the joy and peace which are its sure effects: With what composure, with what desire, with what triumph does he enter the dark valley—scarce dark to him! There is no trepidation, no hurrying bustle, the indication of conscious unpreparedness. The business of his day of life is done: and he is ready for the journey. He knows that He who has been his guide throughout the rest of the way will be his rod and staff in this closing stage of it. A passing cloud may go over him; but the star, which at first directed him to the Saviour of sinners, appears again as he comes nigh the place where Jesus is. In the twinkling of an eye, he finds himself in the light ineffable, not by the side of the humbled babe of Bethlehem, but in the presence of the King, in the company of cherubim and seraphim; the song which he had begun on earth exchanged for the harp which he shall never lay down.

In the review of this whole subject, may not some find a lesson of reproof? The reason, we see, why so many die with little comfort, is with themselves. I am not forgetting that Christians have sometimes departed in a frame of mind very different from that of triumphant assurance: but the general rule unquestionably is that they who have lived to God die happily. How strange is it then that many should be so indifferent about securing this happiness, when they know, or ought to know, that the way to God through Jesus Christ is as open to them as to any who have already found access! But, besides the improper views which are formed of religion itself, we are to account for the culpable security of professing Christians, from the influence of the world, and the artifices of Satan. Against these, O be watchful. Remember that "the friendship of this world is enmity with God;" and better is it to encounter any worldly inconvenience, than to forfeit communion with *Him*. See that time be secured for the special exercises of faith and devotion. Resist the diversions by which the great adversary would turn you aside from them. Leave not these precious opportunities to the hazard of circumstances; let them have their place in your fixed arrangements. Assuredly, all the time which you thus devote will be found to have been limited enough, when you come to die.

I would only farther, in my direct improvement of the subject, notice, as suggested by it, the advantage of early religion. To have much comfortable experience in the ways of God, we must begin betimes. Calculate not on a death-bed repentance. Though you could promise your-

selves the power and opportunity for this, which you cannot, does it content you to be saved as by fire? "Blessed" indeed, "are the dead which die in the Lord?" But who are they on whom this blessing is so emphatically pronounced? The following words show that it is mainly applicable, and in its highest import, to those who have fought a good fight, and evinced their faith by a course of obedience: "Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

I know, you have anticipated my reference in these thoughts to my aged relative now with God, whose removal from us I this day mourn, and in mourning for whom I feel assured of your sympathy. Of the observations which have just been made, his life and death were, in no ordinary degree, illustrative. His religion was of that fervent kind which I have described. Few, I may venture to say, have walked more closely with God; few have tasted more abundantly of those spiritual pleasures, or more ardently and perseveringly sought them.

My father's religion began early, was deeply laid, and solid. Like Timothy, whose faith dwelt before in his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice; it was his privilege to be brought up under a very pious mother, whose greatest anxiety concerning her children was about their salvation. He had been deprived of his other parent at a very early period of his life, and was thus the more dependent on her instructions: and, happily for him, she felt it incumbent on her to be doubly painful. He used to think with much interest, and speak with warm affec-

tion, of her eminent godliness, and her deep concern about his best interests. It may be useful as an encouragement to mothers, to state that it was her practice to keep up the worship of God in her family morning and evening; and her son remembered, even to his old age, her prayers, often accompanied with many tears.

It frequently happens that those, who are thus religiously trained in early life, slide by a comparatively easy and almost imperceptible process into the possession of the comforts of the Gospel, and the habits of Christian character, without being subjected to any severe exercise under the terrors of the law. But it was not so with him. He was probably, as I know he thought he had been, the subject of the saving operations of the Holy Ghost even in early boyhood: but when somewhat advanced, though still a young man, he was the subject of a very painful law-work, under which he was made to know the terrors of the Lord, and to say, "What shall I do?" For many weeks, almost every thought was engrossed about the state of his soul. The interests of eternity were felt by him in their momentous value. Though he had been of most regular habits, he saw that in himself he was a helpless sinner—every page of the Bible seemed to speak wrath to him. Such an effect had the terrors of the Lord upon his soul, and also upon his body, that his situation attracted the anxious concern of persons of his Christian acquaintance. He, at length, found joy and peace in a believing acceptance of Christ, as exhibited in the promises of the Gospel. But the exercise of soul through which he had been made to pass, left impressions of the serious importance of

spiritual things upon his mind, which were never effaced.

Some of the first evidences of his regeneration which he perceived, were a love to the people of God, and a delight in attending on Christian ordinances. He joined himself at an early period of his life (it was about sixty years ago) to a society for prayer and fellowship in this city, composed, as I have heard him relate, of five individuals besides himself—all of them old men, any one of whom, he said, might have been his grandfather. When he was introduced to these pious persons, two of them were appointed to converse with him, I presume according to their custom, one of whom expressed his agreeable surprise at this indication of a decidedly serious taste in so young a man, and facetiously asked him, if he would not prefer to spend his hours of recreation in other entertainments with persons of his own years. He used to recollect with much pleasure, the heavenly hours which he spent in the company of these men of prayer.

In a mind so impressed, it is natural to suppose, the thoughts of giving himself to the work of the ministry, would be solemnly entertained, and, only, after mature deliberation, adopted. He observed the leadings of Providence, and considered himself as it were shut up to prosecute learning with a view to the sacred office. While a student of Divinity, he occupied a situation as tutor in a family in the south country, where his charge mainly consisted in superintending the education of one young gentleman, of amiable manners. Here, his labours and prayers were as anxiously directed to the spiritual improvement

of his pupil, as to his culture as a scholar; and my father remarked with much gratitude to God the decided evidences of a blessing having attended his pains—happy presage of his future usefulness!

Soon after his license, my deceased relative was invited to the charge of the Congregation of Greenock; and about the same time, having been sent to preach during a few Sabbaths to the congregation of Well's-street, London, received a call to take the charge of their souls. Both calls were unanimous; and were to him the occasion of much spiritual exercise: the former was preferred. The day of his ordination in Greenock was recorded by him as a day in which he had enjoyed an eminent down-pouring of the Holy Spirit, and much inward consolation. He had other early tokens of the favour of his Divine Master, and seals of his ministry.

How largely his time was devoted to the searching of the Scriptures of truth, and to converse with God, might almost be inferred from the delight with which he was accustomed to address himself to Christians, and the ease with which he applied, out of the word of God, the consolations and directions suited to their various cases. But those only knew his intense ardour in the study of the Bible, and the cultivation of this retired heavenly fellowship, who were near him and about him, the witnesses of his daily habits. His closet was a Bethel: the word of God was scarcely ever shut on his table, or out of his hands; and often when intruded on, he was found in tears.—In the enjoyment of the fulness of the Spirit, he could not refrain from uttering forth the praises of his God and his

longings after him; and his musings gently audible, and in his case too habitual to be ascribed to doubtful motives, were calculated to make a solemn and interesting impression on the minds of all who were by.

It was his custom to read the whole of the Scriptures four times, occasionally, I believe, even six times in a year. And I need not tell you, my respected hearers, who had so often the opportunity of observing it, how readily and accurately he could quote the words of the Holy Ghost, to the very last. His discourses in general abounded with Scripture illustration, and, having early taken up the opinion of the good Halyburton in favour of the abundant use of Scripture language, he scarcely seemed to feel himself happy in giving forth two or three statements of his own, without subjoining a confirmation of them in the very words of the Spirit. He minded little the ornaments of composition, though possessed of a powerful imagination which, with a little pains, might have commanded them. With him, the intellectual exercise of study was largely merged in the spiritual and devotional, and, when employed in preparing Divine truths for others, his attitude and countenance showed that he was feeding upon them himself.

Of his faithfulness in his other ministerial duties, and especially in annual visitation and catechising, during the long period of his incumbency, both in his first and his latter charge, he has left a testimony in the consciences of many.

But it is a higher praise that the character of the minister was supported by him, in a very exemplary degree, when not employed directly in his professional duties.

The spiritual character of his conversation was what few who had ever been in company with him failed to remark. You could hardly speak on any subject to him, but he took occasion to introduce pious sentiments, and so naturally withal, that they appeared anything but forced or unseasonable. His piety was accompanied with cheerfulness, yet not with levity—and the slightest approach to indecent conversation—alas ! too common among some of no small professions—he checked in a moment. There was no point that seemed a more settled one with him, than this—to carry his religion about with him ; to urge it offensively nowhere, but to own it with manly courage anywhere.

I might mention, in connection with the spirituality of his conversation, his temperance, which was of the strictest kind, uniform and invariable.

Another leading feature in his character was uprightness—stern, unbending uprightness. Here was, in fact, the side on which it was most easy to take advantage of him. He was so ignorant of the world's cunning, and could so little conceive even, of the devices and intrigue of men of double mind, that persons, however inferior in intellectual capacity or in dignity of moral and Christian character, could, if possessed of a little craftiness, or worldly policy, almost as easily impose on him as on a child. For such he was no match. I could mention some incidents strikingly illustrative of this part of his character, but I fear to be tedious.

None were more willing to allow him the praise of honesty than some of the very men with whom, twenty-

eight years ago, he had occasion to contend in his zealous concern for the principles of the covenanted reformation, the principles of the Church of Scotland in its best times. From the first, and throughout the whole of that controversy, he acted a consistent part; and with the most upright motives. For, instead of being impelled merely by temper, or led by motives of interest, he felt the separation from that respected body in which were many to whom he was warmly attached, as a sacrifice that he could have yielded to only in obedience to the convictions of his conscience. And, though it fell to him to take a lead on one side, he uniformly avoided seeking any advantage from the schemes or canvassings to which the leaders of parties so often resort as means of carrying their measures. When an aged and amiable Father, of the same sentiments with him, but perplexed in his mind what course to adopt, asked my deceased parent, "What is to be done?" his reply, as I have heard him relate, was, "Lift your heart to God, and seek direction from *him*: for my part, I have taken my resolution, and hope to be firm." In truth, at the time when he left the Synod, he did not even know whether his congregation would decide in the same manner.* But he was fixed in his purpose rather to retire from his ministry, than acquiesce in changes which he could not reconcile with his ordination vows.

* He was then in Greenock. It is hardly necessary to say that the great body of that congregation steadily adhered to him, both from principle and affection. Nor, though but a few years afterwards, he yielded to an urgent and repeated call from another quarter, did he ever cease to cherish towards his first congregation, an affectionate recollection of their kind and duteous attachment, during the long period of their connection with him.

The veneration which those I have referred to cherished for his character to the last of his days, though adopting, conscientiously also, I believe, different views of the questions that divided them, was alike honourable to his integrity and to their candour.

After the division, his brethren of the same side committed to him the charge of training their students of divinity for the sacred office,—a charge, however, which, in a few years after, he resigned into their hands, chiefly I believe in consequence of their finding it impossible to supply his pulpit with the ministrations of others, during the time of the young men being with him, and his sense of the incompatibility without this of such a double charge, in the case at least of the head of a large family, and the minister of a widely scattered congregation.

I may be allowed to add what a gratification I, as his son, have felt in having heard the affectionate attestations of pious persons in almost every part of the country where I have had occasion to preach, and to converse with members of the church, to the comfort and edification which they and others have derived from the spiritual and savoury ministrations of my father.

I only further add, that never did I admire the power of religion in him more than under the growing infirmities of age, and during his last afflictions. His soul was as a weaned child. His patience and meekness were well calculated to commend the grace of God—the more so as his feelings were naturally strong, and his temper ardent. How often did he acknowledge the kindness of his Father in heaven; and, as to men, never did I hear him utter one

harsh expression, under his long confinement and illness, against any parties by whom he had been injured. Though of keen feelings he was most forgiving. His "heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord." He viewed His providence in every thing, and with a smile often expressed his confidence in the Ruler of all, when he thought of the ingratitude of men, or the faithlessness of false brethren.*

If I discovered any impatience in him, it was in his longings to be "home at his Father's house," but which he expressed in submission to the will of God. Often have I heard him repeating those lines of a devout poet,—

"—O make haste to bring me home
To that delicious place,
Where fears and doubts can never come,
Nor clouds to veil thy face."—*ERSKINE*.

He has now obtained his desire. He is not—God has taken him, and like Enoch, before his translation, he had this testimony, in his own mind as well as the mind of others, that he pleased God. It was delightful to see him to the last, holding fast his confidence through his Lord and Saviour—calling God "Father," and often dwelling on the name,—beginning the song of glory ere he had yet mingled with the spirits of the just made perfect. "Glory," was one of the last expressions which I heard him utter;

* Of his later flock, as well as earlier, he enjoyed the warm affection: though, in his old age, questions with the local managers caused him grief—which could easily have been adjusted by candid co-presbyters;—especially as he offered reference to arbiters. It was a satisfaction to his family that the proceedings of what was nominally a "Synod,"—though really a few called together in haste,—were repented of by most of the actors; and that a full Synod ultimately expunged the very record, with expressions of regret and reverence towards their much esteemed father.

he thrice repeated the word, and added, "He loved me, and gave himself for me."

It is now our part to remember them who have spoken to us the good word of God; and, while we glorify the grace of God in them, to be followers of their faith and patience. For let us not omit to say, that in describing the excellences of our departed friend, our time would be ill spent if this served no better purpose than that of offering the incense of praise to a spirit now beyond the reach equally of our praise and blame. In so far as he attained to a resemblance of God, he was just what the grace of God made him; and to God belongs the praise; to us the duty of imitating his virtues.—I trust it has been to the edification and comfort of not a few among you, that this congregation enjoyed the last labours of one whom even a son may be permitted to call a devoted servant of Christ. It is not yet very many months since he addressed you with his wonted recollection and earnestness.—Within that short time, we have seen others of the devout and faithful called away! On the same day on which the remains of my father were committed to the dust, a good man was laid in the grave, who officiated for a while among you in the work of the Eldership, and to whom, nothing should make you forget that, as a worshipping society, you lie under very considerable obligations. How large a portion of his time, and labours, and prayers were given to your interests at an early period of your existence as a congregation, many of you know. He was a man who appeared to be very conscientious in all his relative duties; and in his diligent performance of his duties as an

elder, particularly in the visiting of the sick, was exceeded, I will say, by none of the worthy men around me.

Thus we have call upon call. Not the very aged only, but those in middle age are removed ; not those in middle age only, but even in youth and in childhood. Some of you are clad in mourning for infants of whom God has bereaved you, when you had but for a little called them yours. Let us be up and be doing. While the door of mercy is open, let us enter by faith,—let us walk with God. So, when we shall have finished our course, shall we also be received into those habitations of peace and purity, where troubles and temptations have for ever ceased.

XII.

NOAH'S FAITH—PROMISE OF THE SEASONS.

"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord ; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour ; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake : for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth ; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."—GEN. viii. 20-22.

It is sad to reflect how soon the history of the human race becomes a record of sin and misery ! The preceding chapters relate how already the cup of iniquity was so full as to have provoked the indignation of the Almighty ruler : and how sin persisted in with a high hand was avenged with a flood, which swept from the earth's surface the existing generation. The event remains a monument of Heaven's retributive justice, and is pointed to in later Scripture as a token and prelude of "the judgment of the great day." Yet, justice was not unmixed with mercy in those dealings of an offended Creator and Judge. We see mercy in the long-suffering of God, which, for a hundred and twenty years while the ark was a preparing, bore with impious men, and by the ministry of His servant Noah

warned them. We see mercy also, in a remnant being spared, and in the promise given to Noah, and in him to the race, that judgment on so devastating a scale should not be repeated. For, man might have been tempted to forebode a repetition of the catastrophe: the hand of industry might have been paralysed, if in sowing his fields the labourer had no security that he should gather. As if in anticipation of this fear, it is here announced by the Almighty that He would not again destroy all flesh as He had done:—that by goodness, rather than by severity, He would try his creature man; and the earth should be a theatre on which his forbearance and grace should be manifested. The terms are very remarkable in which this assurance is given. The prefatory words are such as seem fitted to introduce a message of denunciation rather. The design of mercy is put on a ground which might serve more for the vindication of judgment: “I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth” (*for*, or, as it may be read, *though*). It seems like the relenting of a father, slow to strike: as if God would say, I will not contend against him at such odds, as to bring My strength against his weakness: The depravity so incorrigible by judgment let me pity: the appeal from judgment to mercy I will hear. He shall have his opportunity; the earth shall be spared to him; the ground shall yield its fruit. Behold here the charter by which is held the hope of a regular succession of the seasons!—here the hold which even the ungodly husbandman has on the patience of his

unacknowledged Benefactor ! and—here the promise which the pious husbandman is encouraged to plead !

It will be a part of our business to show the different aspects in which the promise regards the one and the other—the righteous and the sinner. But,

I. It may be profitable to consider the circumstances in which the promise was made, or, to express it otherwise, let us consider the gospel of Noah's day, as it is to be learned from what is testified of him, in the context ; and especially from the act of worship, in connection with which the promise in our text was given.

1. It may be observed that Noah is declared to have been a righteous man ; and his safety was connected with his righteousness. In chapter vii. ver. 1st, the Almighty addresses him thus : "Come thou and all thy house into the ark : for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." We may observe, in this instance, as in many, that verily it is well with the righteous : and the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

But, 2dly, grace is recognised in the narrative as the source of his righteousness. It may be remarked, that, previous to any mention of his personal goodness it is said, Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD (chap. vi. 8). So we are prevented from referring the distinction made in Noah's favour, or in that of his family, to any inherent merit, as if he had been any exception to the description given of the race in general,—that they had all gone out of the way. He was a sinner in common with others : nay, after he had learned to walk with God, the history

too plainly proves that he was but in a comparative sense perfect,—not exempt from the moral infirmities which cleave even to the sanctified :

And so,—3dly, we remark—that Noah was a man of faith—faith in a Saviour yet to be revealed, and in the like promises of pardon on which other believers rely. Faith was in his case, as in that of others, the spring, in subordination to grace, of all his moral excellence.

That he was a believer in Christ, besides being evident from the apostle's assertion that by faith he prepared the ark—and that he was an heir of the righteousness which is by faith (Heb. xi.)—is evinced further by the sacrifice which he offered—as described in the sacred narrative—no act of will-worship, we may be assured, but performed according to Divine requirement, and having all its significance in its reference to Christ, the Lamb of God, who taketh away sin. How can we otherwise think of such an act of worship being so pleasing to Jehovah as that it should be said, He smelled a sweet savour in it,—cordially accepted, or was gratified by it? Can we suppose that the Almighty delights in the blood of an animal, or the burning of its flesh on the altar? Does He need the flesh of bulls,—or does He drink the blood of goats? No! the cattle on a thousand hills are His. If He smelled a sweet savour, it was that He delighted in the manifestation of the patriarch's faith: or delighted in the forethought of that reparation to His injured law, to be made in due season by the shedding of more precious blood. This is what propitiated Divine justice: this is what averted the cloud of Divine anger, and made the sky above Noah's head serene: On

this blood of the Covenant rested the promise of all spiritual and temporal good. Hence it is worthy of being observed, that by the Apostle Paul the same language here used, in respect of the typical offering, is applied to the true antitypical sacrifice: Eph. v. 2,—“Christ hath loved us and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.” Which leads again to our remarking,—

4. That Noah is not to be considered, though receiving promises for others as well as for himself, as standing in a like federal relation to mankind, or being such a covenant head as Adam was, or as Christ is. It is true, the promise concerned others as well as himself; and in a certain sense Noah was a second father of the human race. The blessing was connected, in the way of gracious reward, with his faith; and others are blessed along with him. So it is in the case of many a good man. He believes and is saved; and “his house” with him. But we do not say, *in* him; or that his righteousness is directly imputed to them. In the strict sense of representatives, whose acts affect others directly, Adam and Christ stand alone. They are the “*first*” and the “*second*” man: Adam the head of the entire race; Christ of a spiritual seed. The covenant with Noah concerned one matter simply, and that rather a temporal than a spiritual matter. It was indeed made with him for the benefit of many; but it was not a covenant of works; nor was it the covenant of grace, though to Noah it was a certain development of the latter; a leaf of it—an appendage to it. It was a promise having an important relation to the designs of grace; and

to all who have Noah's faith, it comes with the other and better blessings of that covenant—comes as itself a spiritual benefit, though concerning earthly things. To others,—to the unbelieving—it is not such; it is but in the forbearance of God they share in the earthly good, to which believers have the covenant right. Noah received the promise as a believing and accepted man; others enjoy it with him for good or for evil, in the love or only in the long-suffering of God, just according as they are, or are not, heirs with him of the righteousness which is by faith.

II. Let us examine the promise itself. The terms of it are remarkable. It is a promise of mercy: "I will not again curse the ground for man's sake." Yet the reason given might seem, as we said, more fitted to preface an announcement of judgment; "*for* the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth,"—(*for*, or *though*, as some prefer to translate). Strange reason! but how worthy of God! He fetches an argument from man's weakness for the restraint of his own power. He will not contend with his poor sinning creature at such odds. Man's depravity—his inveterate, and, except by grace, incurable depravity, might warrant judgment without measure; but the Creator sees in it an appeal from His power to His mercy in man's behalf: "I will spare him; by goodness will I try him, and not again destroy the earth as I have done." Behold the relentings of a Father's heart!—of one who loves to bless rather than to curse—to whom judgment is "His strange work!"

It is not implied that the original curse on the earth is totally removed. What is said is that He will not again curse the ground in such sort:—so, one clause explains another,—“neither will I again smite everything living as I have done.”

It is an assurance that the course of nature shall not again be suddenly interrupted, or the elements confused, as when the fountains of the great deep had been broken up, and the windows of heaven opened. Sun and moon should fulfil their revolutions with constancy; earth and sea should obey their assigned limits; day and night, summer and winter, should observe their vicissitudes.

How great the power which ordained these laws, and controls these elements! How surely, by the removal for one moment of the Creator's upholding hand, would the order of the universe be again exchanged for uproar and wild misrule! How slight the change necessary in the position of the earth's axis—how small the derangement in its relation, to the sun, to affect injuriously those alternations of day and night, of cold and heat, of seed-time and harvest! How easily, by a retardation or acceleration of the earth's movements, might a flood be made to return again, and the waters at the equator be precipitated on the poles, or those at the poles on the equator! But how gloriously constant are the ordinances of heaven! with what unbroken regularity has the clock of time proceeded in its rounds! Not a day's variation, not an hour's, in the sun's returnings, in the moon's waxings or wanings, during all the generations since Noah's day. The most perfect chronometer of man's constructing has its deflections—what touching, what

correcting is requisite to check these? But no variations here. Have you ever seen the morning when the looked-for orient beam failed to break upon the mountains? Have you ever seen the winter which did not usher in the spring? Has it ever failed that earth has put on its verdure, and trees and flowers have bloomed again? Has the cherishing glow of summer been denied to the tender herb, the product of earth's cold womb? Have the appointed weeks of harvest failed to gladden the expectant husbandman? Have the fields failed to wave with their yellow treasures, wherewith the mower has filled his hand, and he that bindeth sheaves his bosom?

But we must consider what the text *does not* warrant us to expect as well as does. It does not mean that seed-time and harvest shall always bless alike every locality. While keeping truth with the race, the God of judgment has not surrendered His right to deal with communities of men, or with individuals, as befits a moral administrator. Day and night, summer and winter, so regular in their vicissitudes, are not unvarying in their character. The heavens may be made to be as brass, and the earth as iron, for the transgressions of a land. Famine, as well as pestilence or the sword, may be the rod of God's indignation. "Your sins," says Jeremiah, speaking of the appointed weeks of harvest, "have withholden good things from you" (chap. v.) Yet the remark may be justified that, as if in regard to the literality of the promise, it is seldom that, among the threatenings of the word of God, inundations are mentioned, or alarming overflows of water. Drought—the absence rather than the excess of water—has been com-

missioned to plead the quarrel of His covenant. Still, not in Ezra's time alone, the rain of heaven has fallen alarmingly. Brooks have portentously swollen; neighbourhoods familiar to us have seen fields and flocks and dwellings swept away by the mountain torrent. The lowering sky has emptied its dreaded waterspout on the frail bark of the mariner. God has not promised that the heavens shall not gather blackness; but He has promised that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and that He will remember his covenant with all flesh.

The chapter following that where the text lies, tells us of this token by which, in gracious condescension, Jehovah confirmed His covenant. Not surely that the simple promise of God requires confirmation. Yet the better to allay man's fears, He adds the sign, just as He added to His word His oath for the abundant consolation of the heirs of greater promises:—"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. . . . I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" (Gen. ix. 13-16).

Shall we notice the cavil of the sciolist, that Moses seems to date only from the time of the flood the occurrence of such a phenomenon as the rainbow? It is enough to say that the sacred historian by the term "set" or "appoint" does not describe the rainbow as now for the first time to appear. Granted that in certain dispositions of the watery cloud in relation to the sun, the phenomenon must often have been visible before,—though after all we

do not know those previous dispositions—the words do not necessarily mean any more than that what was already a familiar sight should now and henceforth be a sign. In giving or appointing seals on other occasions, things already existing were taken: the materials were not created of new. So it was with the sacramental bread and wine. So with Joshua's stones of memorial.

"The bow shall be in the cloud; I will look upon it that I may remember" (ver. 16). How graciously assuring! Again, "The bow shall be in the cloud;" he repeats it and repeats it—"This is the token of the covenant which I have established between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth—and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh."

How the security thus given increases in value, when the stability of this covenant with Noah can be, with God's own warrant, applied to illustrate the stability of the better covenant, and made a pledge of the Divine faithfulness for the accomplishment of its greater promises! So does he declare by Isaiah (chap. liv.), "This is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee."

PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT.—The practical lessons of our subject are—

1. That we ought to see God in the seasons; and beware of abusing the constancy of nature, by resting in second causes, or giving to nature's laws the glory that belongs to Him who ordained them. How many under the name of nature practically worship the idol of necessity or chance! Strange that He who gives us all our blessings, should be hidden from us, or unacknowledged, just because the flow of his goodness is so constant, his mercies so innumerable! Many walk God's earth, and drink every hour at the streams of his benignity, yet scarcely invoke his blessing on the bounties they partake of—scarcely name the Giver but to curse by that holy name, or to bless by it, in as irreverent accents and as meaningless. By the devout man, who walks with God, every mercy is seen to come from His hand. Where others at best discern a power which they fear rather than love, *he* recognises the faithfulness and goodness of a covenant God and Father. So,

2. We are taught by the example of Noah, what are the real conditions of earthly enjoyment, or to whom it is that the blessings of the seasons are blessings indeed. The fact of Noah's acceptance first, ere the promise of the text was given to him, instructs us that an interest in the Saviour's sacrifice, or acceptance in the Beloved, gives the real title to the temporal as well as spiritual good of the covenant. Otherwise, we may indeed share in the fruits of the field—in the blessings brought forth by sun and moon: Day and night, and summer and winter, may pass over us in their grateful alternations. But are we contented to be merely monuments of God's long-suffering, and to remain

strangers to His love? Shall we be in the world, only as the place of Divine forbearance, from which we must soon pass away, relinquishing for ever the mercies we have abused, and with no foundation secured for the time to come? What avails earthly good, if alone? The seasons shall not revolve for ever. The sun shall not always shine. The promise to Noah secures, at most, that "while the earth remaineth," day and night, seed-time and harvest, shall not cease. The earth is not always to remain. But there is a covenant whose blessings never fade:—"things present and things to come" are alike secured to all within its bond. Happy indeed are they who take hold of it! Death shall not terminate their enjoyments, but enhance and augment them. But folly unutterable it is to rest in a temporary, fading portion; when by faith in the Saviour we might be assured no less of earth than of heaven, and of heaven than of earth. To whom is the world promised? Is it not to them that are Christ's, it is said, "All things are yours?" "Seek ye first," said Jesus, "the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

3. The subject instructs us in the importance both of personal and of social righteousness. Indirectly, thousands reap the fruits of Noah's faith—themselves strangers to his piety; and blessings innumerable crown the lot of the irreligious for righteous men's sake. But if the explanation, as we have seen, of the apparent failure sometimes of the promise in our text, be that God has, while assuring us of day and night, and summer and winter, reserved in His hands the rights of a moral administrator, we learn

where to place the blame of unpropitious seasons—whether backward Springs, or deficient Harvests. It is sin that is the cause. It is the prayerlessness and unthankfulness and ungodliness of men. These seal up the heavens—these bring the moth, the caterpillar, the worm, the rust—God's great army, the ministers of his displeasure. I do not assert that personal righteousness or social is the title to life. Life in the *full* sense of the term is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. No sinner may hope for it otherwise. Union to him, as has just been said, is the tenure by which earthly as well as heavenly good is primarily held. Still, with personal and social righteousness as the fruit of faith, the promise connects both private and public prosperity. We must give proofs of faith; our *walk* must be with God, by faith. We have seen that Noah was a righteous man; not in the sense of being a believer only. And in many a passage of the word of God we find the truth illustrated that righteousness, in the sense of holy living and holy walking, exalts whether the individual or the nation.

To conclude with a few passages. Hear Isaiah. How describes he the man who has around him the everlasting arms? Chap. xxxiii—"He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: *his* place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." And of a land or people, as of an individual, hear Hosea, or Malachi. By the first, after a threat-

ening of judgment on idolatry,—“Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof—my wine—my wool—my flax”—Jehovah thus comforts his nation in connection with a time of revival and reform: “I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth. . . . And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field; . . . and I will break the bow and the sword, and make them to lie down safely. . . . Thou shalt know the Lord. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.” So Malachi (chap. iii.) The nation had been cursed with a curse—the prophet explains why: They had robbed God—they had neglected His house and polluted His offerings. He assures them of returning providential favours, but only in connection with their return to God. “Return unto me, and I will return unto you. . . . And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.”

XIII.

CHRIST THE COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE.

"Thus saith the Lord, . . . I will give thee for a covenant of the people. Also the sons of the stranger, &c., every one that taketh hold of my covenant ; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer," &c.—ISAIAH xlix. 8 ; lvi. 6. 7.

THE prophet Isaiah, so remarkable for the clearness of his predictions as to the Messiah, is no less remarkable for his vivid delineations of the latter-day glory of the Church—in many passages dwelling in rapturous prophetic strains on the blessing in store for Gentiles as well as Jews, under the expanding light of the New Testament economy.

Our text speaks of "the stranger," and pleasing words do both the passages embraced in it speak for the man of any nation, or dwelling however far from the scene of ancient revelations, who comes and joins himself to the Lord, to love the Lord, and serve him. Here is presented, in the language of Jehovah himself, the stranger's warrant of faith—his assurance of acceptance. The prophet says in prediction what apostles afterwards say in congratulation, addressing Gentile converts to the faith: "Ye are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the

saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. ii.)

The rich variety of the manner of the Scripture writers in illustrating the common truth may minister to the strengthening of our faith. What an apostle represents of the unity of the Church, by reference to the one foundation stone, the prophet represents by inclusion in one covenant.

I propose, in dependence on Divine guidance,

I. To consider the words here addressed to Christ, suggestive as they are of the nature and method of the gospel salvation;

II. To explain what is meant by taking hold of the covenant; and

III. To open up the import of the encouraging promise connected in the text with this privilege or duty.

I. Though the idea of God's entering into covenant with man is familiar to readers of the Bible, it is not the less a subject for holy wonder and gratitude that the great God should ever have condescended to treat with his creatures by such a way of covenant. Considering that the creature owes his every power of action and very being to the Almighty Creator, He might have dealt with man in the way of absolute dominion, prescribing a law of life, and reserving in His own hands undisclosed the result or issue of obedience. But, from the beginning and all along, it has pleased Him graciously to encourage obedience by announcing terms of life, and bringing Himself, so to speak,

under bond by promise : in the first intance, or in what we are accustomed to call the covenant of works, making man's continuance in happiness to depend on the easy condition of serving God with the powers conferred upon him ; —powers whose very exercise was a part of his blessedness ; and of obeying the limits to self gratification which Divine goodness and wisdom as well as sovereignty saw it fit to impose. Man, being in honour, did not abide. The law ordained for life became a law unto death. It has not been laid on man again to work for life. It was still indeed by covenant his state was to be retrieved ; but the language of our text points to the peculiarity of that blessed arrangement by which salvation is secured for him rather than achieved by him. It is a covenant with a Mediator in his behalf ; so entirely fulfilled as to its condition independently of mere human agency ; so absolutely conveying eternal life in the way of a gift ; that man's part is main'y to take hold of it, and Christ is here called the very "covenant," as being the fulfiller of all righteousness, in whom its promises are all "Yea and Amen."

This peculiarity of the covenant of grace comes out in the frequent style of Scripture, as well where the covenant is not literally mentioned as where it is. The promises are not only in Christ, but made to him. They are summarily of two kinds : those which more immediately respect the Mediator himself as the Head, and those which respect the members of His spiritual body. In the text and context we may observe assurance given by the Father to the Son, of His pleasure in the glorious undertaking, and of His sustaining presence and help. And in

corresponding passages of this same book we find the Father's promise, that his servant in whom his soul delighteth shall not fail nor be discouraged till He "shall set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law;" and again, "I will divide him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong." We see in such passages that the only direct parties in the covenant are God and Christ. Man does not appear at all, except as concerned in the results of the Saviour's work. We may observe that the earliest revelation of grace or first promise points to the intervention of a third party who should bruise the serpent's head; and the spirit of this early revelation characterises the prophecies throughout, as they all bear witness to the chosen One, the Father's righteous servant, and identify human redemption with His conflict, and with His reward and triumph.

The second class of promises consists of those which more directly respect His ransomed people. In these the blessings promised, though fruits of the Redeemer's travail of soul, and depending on his everlasting righteousness, are connected apparently with conditions and qualifications in the heirs of promise themselves;—they are promises to faith, to prayer, to new obedience. They are for those who fear God's name; for the poor, the contrite, those that trust in the Lord and wait for Him; for those, as in the verses before us, who join themselves to the Lord, to serve him and to love his name. So far the covenant may appear to be made with man: yet are we ever to remember, that these very qualifications, which seem to stand in such passages as conditions, are provided for in the promises

directly made to the surety. Yes; faith itself and repentance and obedience and even prayer—the promises to Christ embrace all. They are all of grace—they *are* grace—God's work in us, though they are also so many descriptions of man's duty, and no less necessarily, in their act and exercise, man's, than they are, in their principle and cause, of God. In other words, as has been well expressed by a practical writer,* there are no conditional promises in the covenant which may not be resolved into unconditional grace; or it may be affirmed that as, on the one hand, there are no promises made to the Mediator but which result in benefits corresponding secured to His people;—*his* justification, in effect, theirs; his victory theirs; his glory theirs:—so, on the other hand, there is no promise made to them, which is not included in, and founded on, the promises to the Head, and as fulfilled in them, terminates in His glory also. We find in this the explanation of what might seem anomalous. Looking at passages in which the new covenant is described, as Jer. xxxi. or Heb. x.; where it is said "This is the covenant which I will make with them after those days," we naturally expect that we shall find mention of two parties, not one: or we expect at least condition and promise, reciprocal engagements. But what do we find? promise on one side only; nothing but promise. One single party speaks; the other only appears indirectly, as a recipient or subject of grace, nothing more: destined indeed to be made active and obedient; but this activity of the new nature, this obedience as a part of the promised blessing undertaken for—secured. All is

* Mrs. Graham.

promise, nothing but promise: "I will forgive their iniquity, I will put my laws in their heart: I will be their God; they shall be my people." Is it then no covenant really? Is there no second contracting party? Are we not accustomed to say, There are two at any bargain or compact? The apostle will answer this question. When he quotes these promises, it is in the act of his reasoning of Christ's priesthood, and the perfection of that work whereby He did the will of God in the body prepared for him; it is in the act of showing the great ransom-price, and the benefit resulting; the correspondence in value of the blessing with the perfection of the sacrifice. It is an offering once for all, not needing to be repeated; and the justification is once for all,—from all sin, so as "no more to be remembered" in judgment. Yea, sanctification no less than justification is secured; subjective or internal, as well as objective grace: "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Nor grace alone, but glory—all good present and to come: "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

Here, then, is the meaning of "I will give thee for a covenant:" Christ has done all, has fulfilled all. "Of the people there was none with him." They inherit, but it is in His right; the covenant is indeed made with them, but only as being in him: most strictly to define, it is made *with Him for them*. The covenant unconditional to us was conditional to Christ: and the reason that nothing but promise is here, no voice but the voice of a promising God heard here, is that the covenant is to us a deed, a conveyance, a charter, a testament,—a name, indeed this last, which the cove-

nant of grace once and again receives. Hence, too, the blood of Christ is the blood of the covenant; and the sacramental cup is called the cup of the testament in his blood. The covenant is to believers one of promise alone; they receive a full and free salvation; and any covenant or vow of theirs, any engagement on their part at the sacramental table or otherwise, is but the response of love and gratitude, in a recognition of those obligations of duty which are inseparable from the gifts of grace.

II. This leads to the consideration of what is meant by "taking hold of the covenant."

It is inclusive of three things: first, the appropriation of Christ himself by the faith which unites to him: secondly, the pleading, applying, and resting on the promises: thirdly, the consenting to the whole design of the covenant, or cordial acquiescence in all its conditions or implied obligations, as well as reception of its privileges.

1. Man's activity is not dispensed with or superseded by grace. The taking hold of the covenant is one of those descriptions or *analogies* which suggest that it must be no mere speculative assent to the gospel message. Other representations of it—for they are very various—also remind us how earnest and how particular should be our appropriation of the blessing. And if, as we have seen, Christ is the all of the covenant, what is faith primarily but a receiving of Him? Its very preciousness lies in its uniting us to the Saviour; and union to Himself is the tenure by which the blessings are held. Hence the frequency of the expression "in Christ Jesus:" "Of Him are

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ye in Christ (1 Cor. i. 30), who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." "All are yours; and ye are Christ's," says the apostle. "Receiving the Lord Jesus" is Paul's word for faith, as it is the evangelist John's also (chap. i. 12), "To as many as received him, to them gave He power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Faith has not unaptly been called the hand of the soul by which the blessing is received; it is the eye no less by which we "see the Son." Nor till the understanding is in some degree enlightened to appreciate the soul's necessity, and the Saviour's sufficiency, will it with due earnestness cleave to Him. But, once enlightened, once persuaded by preventing grace, what more suitable to express its action than the taking hold of the covenant, or "fleeing for refuge to the hope set before us?"

2. It is the appropriating, and pleading, the promised grace. Some have defined faith to be a taking God at his word. This is no unsuitable definition; and the inspired writers themselves not unfrequently represent faith as a trust in God's word, the repose of the soul in his promises. They ever indeed keep its relation to the person of Christ prominent: "I live by the faith of the Son of God," says Paul: "To them that believe on his name," says John. But there is a taking hold of the promises also. There is an "embracing them," as well as being "persuaded of them" which characterises the heirs of salvation, and which is exemplified by Scripture saints: "These all died in faith,"—it is testified of the early believers,—“not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were

persuaded of them, and embraced them." Such faith inspired the prayers of Jacob, as he thus pleaded: "Thou didst say, I will surely do thee good," and the wrestlings of Moses as he appeals to the Divine mercy and truth on behalf of Israel, "Remember thy servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." So also another prophet (Micah vii.) pleads, "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." How great is the honour belonging to all the true Israel in being thus permitted to plead, to reason with God, by his plighted truth as well as mercy! It is the part of faith to put God in remembrance, and He takes it well at their hand. The text assures us of this. Yea, elsewhere it is noted to the reproach of his people that they failed to use this permitted privilege: "There is none that calleth on thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee;" and again, "Fury is not in Me: . . . let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me" (Isa. xxvii.)

3. The consenting to the whole design of the covenant may be included in the idea of the text: that is, the soul acquiesces in every condition involved in the covenant, consenting, well pleased, to be all that God would it should be, as well as to receive all that God wills it should enjoy. This is what has sometimes been called covenanting with God, not however as a making of terms with our Maker: the conditions of which we speak as involved in the covenant are very different from the condition of the covenant itself. It is not that anything that believers

may be or can do is viewed as the ground on which the privilege turns, nor is it accounted any equivalent for grace received. No: all the obedience and all the devotion which men can vow is felt to be due to God, whether it be formally plighted or no. But the grateful soul recognising Divine goodness finds in its new necessities, or in new manifestations of mercy, fresh calls to reciprocal stipulations of duty. If to oblige one's-self by formal promise may deepen one's sense of that duty, or give definiteness in time, manner, or amount, to the pure spontaneous returns of gratitude, is there anything in this incompatible with ingenuous obedience? Is there aught of the self-righteous or the mercenary, in men connecting their vows of self-consecration with either the experience or the hope of new mercies? It is on this principle we may explain and vindicate covenants of duty, without at all confounding them with covenants of works, or disparaging the one covenant of grace. In their form, indeed, these covenants, personal or social, may seem on some occasions to look like attempts at bargaining with the Almighty. "If God will be with me," said Jacob in his vow at Bethel, "and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

This is the very dictate of nature; it is no sordid nor mercenary sentiment, which disposes to bind the sacrifice to the horns of the altar, or to raise the pillar and vow the vow, under the constraining power of goodness experienced,

or deliverance anticipated. Though in form conditional, like this vow of the patriarch, such is but another mode of expressing the suppliant's assured hope. Jacob had already received the promise of the Divine presence and protection: he needed not to regard it as a thing contingent; so that "If God will be with me," is in effect but saying, "Since God will be with me." It is no conditional vow: it is faith and love antedating the compliance with new calls to duty, or recognising in anticipation fresh occasions of thanksgiving and praise. So, such a vow just comes to rank with other engagements of self-consecration by which devout souls gladly bind themselves: all presupposing faith's reception of the message of grace; all done in dependence on grace; all meaning no more than the solemn recognition of claims on God's part to such returns of love and obedience, as gratitude calls for.

We have often thought that partakers of the Lord's Supper may not be beyond the need of being guarded against errors which right views of the covenant of grace would correct—the errors of a self-righteous feeling on the one hand, and of discouraging fear on the other. The sacraments are, doubtless, seals of the covenant of grace; and, in the institution of the sacred ordinance of the supper, the Saviour expressly said, "This cup is the new testament, or covenant, in my blood." Our translators render the term, which signifies either covenant or testament, by the latter word here. But, whether covenant or testament, it is primarily the seal on God's part that is to be regarded, not the seal or pledge on ours. Primarily, we say, for there is implied the pledge on our part also. But it is a mistake

to consider the great or first design of the ordinance to be the sealing of the engagement on man's side. It comes of this view of the matter that many shrink from approaching the table of the Lord, because of the supposed difficulty of fulfilling the terms of their covenant, or the danger of breaking so solemn a sacramental pledge. Others may consider the willingness to make such a surrender of themselves to the Lord as the main business, and may rest satisfied when this is, to all their consciousness, sincerely done. But, seen in its true light, the sacrament sets forth the Gospel in its rich provisions, and, as a seal of the covenant of grace, confirms the promises on God's part. These promises, as we have seen, cover man's part indeed also; and the communicating act signifies at once the reception of grace, and the recognition of God's claim, as the free giver, and promiser, to the obedience of the receiver. So in that ordinance is sealed the promise of the needed grace and strength—the covenant embraces all,—the faith, the love, the holy obediential life. How different is the feeling of him who vows, not as a party contracting, so properly, but as a party acquiescing: promising indeed to God; but in the faith of God's promise first—receiving first, not giving; though giving also, in hearty self-consecration! And oh, how heartily, under such influences, will the soul engage or renew its engagement to be the Lord's! Where more ready with its promise, its vow, than at the feast of love; in the sight of those costly provisions of grace; or while handling those memorials suggestive of the most impellent motives to new obedience, and so fitted to help in the appropriation of the needed strength!

III. The promise in the text itself is one that sounds pleasing to the ear; and will not fail in the experience of the true believer, and earnest worshipper. It is no vain thing to seek God: they shall not be ashamed that wait for Him. Religion has in it the materials of a rational joy. Heathen worship is mainly dictated by fear. But the true God wills that we should trust him, love him, and serve him in love. Faith, the real faith by which men take hold of the covenant, can hardly fail to be attended with some measure of joy. The free pardon experienced, the spirit of adoption received, sanctifying grace felt in its power, bringing the mind into accordance with the will of God—these are the materials of joy, the blessings which by the covenant are secured to the vessels of mercy even now. And, then, who can describe what is beyond, secured no less, and already known in foretaste?

But, our text supposes that a certain divine agency may be necessary to enable Christians to assure themselves that they do indeed possess the heavenly treasure. While the treasure belongs to all the children of God, it is not every believer that realises the joy, at least in its higher measures, which is a natural accompaniment of faith; nor does the same Christian possess equally at all times the promised comfort. We hear highly-favoured saints praying, "Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation." How encouraging such a promise as this in our text!—"I will bring him," says Jehovah, "and make him joyful." It is at once an assurance to every believer of his being blessed in believing; and to some, if not all, at certain seasons, of a higher joy.

So also the place of the blessing is described—"My holy mountain,—My house of prayer." It is in and by the ordinances that faith, and hope, and joy will be quickened and nourished. Not that to any one locality the promise is restricted; for the time should come—it has come—when neither with Jerusalem, nor with Gerizim, is God's house identified. It is anyv here and everywhere the promise is to be accomplished, where the Father is worshipped in spirit and in truth. There, wherever His covenant is trusted in, is the church of the living God. As wide as the world, is the sphere of spiritual fellowship with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Ere yet Jerusalem was the place of Jehovah's name, Jacob found the house of God and the gate of heaven on the plains of Bethel. Those disciples who walked with Jesus on the road to Emmans, were not less joyful in the Redeemer than they whose prayers ascended from the courts of the temple. Neither were the joys of martyrs and saints less, when in dens and caves of the earth they found their only sanctuary; nor did the prison walls which enclosed the persons of the worshippers, hinder the incense of their praise rising from the unseen spiritual altar. Yet, though we are thus fully warranted to take the expression in so large and comprehensive a sense,—for it must be in a figurative sense, surely, that the mountain of the Lord's house was to be established on the top of the mountains, and all nations were to flow to it:—yet, we may rightly understand the promise as holding forth a special encouragement to attendance on the public ordinances of grace. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of

Jacob ! The wilful despiser of the public sanctuary would seem to forfeit such a promise as this—he who, on the plea that he can alone, and apart, commune with his God, deserts the courts of the Lord, and cares not to cultivate the communion of saints. They doubtless can best tell of the fulfilment of this promise, who, while indeed seeking God apart also, are ready to say with the Psalmist, “How amiable are Thy tabernacles, Lord God of hosts !” “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up to the house of the Lord.” Nor is the promise restricted to any one ordinance of grace : all of them are precious, and by means of any of them may Christ manifest himself to His earnest seekers. Yet it may truly be claimed for that sacrament in which Christ crucified is so evidently set forth, and the covenant of redemption ratified over the affecting emblems of His body and blood, that at that sacred feast souls have been comforted and assured, and made to sing as on the heights of Zion. There God has often sealed their interest in His love : and there they have sealed their consecration to Him. It is true indeed, sovereignty is to be recognised even there. It is not always that at a sacramental table, the joy of the devout soul is full. The same Christian who has in prayer, it may be, found Him whom his soul loveth, has gone from the communion table sorrowing that he sought Him and found Him not. But to how many again has it been honoured as the very presence-chamber or banqueting-house of the King of glory ! There faith has been turned into vision, and as the eye of the soul has seen the King in his beauty, and beheld the land afar off. There hope has taken wing, and mingled its transports

with the songs of the blessed. There love has gone forth in enlarged affection and desire, and reposed complacent on the bosom of the chiefest among ten thousand. There repentance has washed Christ's feet with the tears of joy and tears of contrition. And gratitude has anointed the pillar and vowed the vow; and there the springs of holy activity, refreshed with the oil of the Spirit, have made the soul, in the aspirings of new obedience, like the chariots of Amminadib. How expressive the language of the Church, in that song. "Draw me, we will run after Thee: the King hath brought me into His chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember Thy love more than wine: the upright love Thee!"

APPLICATION.—Let me congratulate those in whom the words of our text have been fulfilled. Let me affectionately beseech others not to put away from themselves the blessing promised in such encouraging terms.

First, Ye children of the covenant, know your privilege. Walk worthy of it; glorify God by a faith corresponding in steadfastness with the grounds of confidence presented in His word. Count Him faithful who hath promised; and when events may be disappointing and trying, comfort yourselves with this, as did the man according to God's own heart: "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." With me, he says. It is, as we have seen, with Christ it is made: but with you also, if he has brought you within the bond of it, and if by faith you have united with Hira in whom we have obtained the inheritance. And He will be mindful of his

covenant : it stands fast with you, for you, in your blessed Head. As surely as the Father takes not his love from Him, neither shall his faithfulness to you fail ; though He may visit your sins with the rod, and your faults with chastisement. But be ye steadfast also in His covenant. The taking hold of it is both your privilege and your duty. And the duty as well as privilege is not limited to the day of your first faith, or your conversion. It is your wisdom to strengthen your heart every day by contemplating the richness, the freshness, the stability of its provisions. And, truly, while looking at these provisions, you may see how reasonably it is required of you to rejoice in the Lord alway. Yet it is not the joy of the worldling this : nor is it incompatible with frequent exercises of repentance, and godly sorrow for sin. Yea, blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. And very precious promises are on record, made to those who take deeply to heart the dishonour done to Jehovah's name by the sins of others, as well as by their own. To such He will manifest His covenant, and clearly teach His way. "I will gather them—Jehovah says—that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, to whom the reproach of it was a burden." Such contrite ones, such mourners, He will bring to his holy mountain and make joyful, in the measure and in the season which to his wisdom shall seem meet.

Second, The subject illustrates the difference between a true and a false faith, or between a well warranted confidence in God, and presumption. It is with a covenant God alone we may safely take to do. They who disregard the revealed method of access to Him, what do they but

peril their souls on the veriest speculations? Were it enough simply to hope in Divine mercy, or the general uncovenanted goodness of God, why was the scheme of grace revealed? why a covenant made at all? Is it not our obvious interest to have a reason for our hope, and to seek certainty, if it be attainable? But, what certainty can there be apart from the grounds of confidence to which God Himself has set His seal? It was a saying of the great reformer, Luther: "I will have nothing to do with an absolute God!" The words might seem irreverent: but they had their very meaning in his deep reverence; his consciousness of unfitness in himself, in common with every sinner, to stand before a holy God—his fear of presumption, though also his boldness of faith. How little, with too many, of this fear! How boldly they take God in their own hand! How cruel to their own souls in resting in vague, conjectural, notions of the Divine character; of what He should do, must do, as a God of mercy; instead of taking hold of His promise, and hoping on the warranted grounds of the Divine truth and faithfulness!

Thirdly, and lastly, Who would not desire to be of that people whose God is the Lord? And who need despair? Not the stranger: let him take encouragement. The promise here is for such as he is. Let him draw near to the throne of grace. Nor is it the stranger only in the sense of being an alien from the commonwealth of Israel. It is the "stranger," be he Jew or Gentile—(for even they who were "the nigh" are now far off),—who is found wandering from God—from the only home and rest of the immortal spirit, and who is vainly seeking in the creature

what is only to be found in the Creator. A stranger he is indeed ; alone, whether in solitude or in the crowd ; who is without God and without Christ ! Your Father in heaven beckons you back, oh wanderer ; you are his by right. He formed you to be for his praise and service. He formed you to be happy in the enjoyment of Himself as your supreme good. And, especially, to every baptized person may we appeal on God's behalf, yea, on your own. His name is on you : you bear about with you the token of God's propriety in you ; we would also say—the token of a special relationship to Him as your Father in heaven, which will be found to be a reality and no fiction, unless you are untrue to yourselves—a reality, if in faith you plead it—a reality, in respect of responsibility at least, even if you cast it off. But *will* you cast it off ? surely no ! Cast off as nothing what parents' solicitude did for you while yet unconscious ? did in the prayerful wrestling of their faith, taking hold for you of the covenant, initiating you in the fellowship of its proffered grace : Do you account this nothing ? And if they also undertook, in anticipation, the vow by which you should own yourselves to be the Lord's, will you spurn away that early act of dedication, by which, in seeking to bind you to God's service, they only consulted for your best freedom, your real happiness ? Rather let us hope you will ratify the parental act by your own act,—taking hold of the covenant for yourselves—by faith, we mean, and also, as occasion may be afforded, by a compliance with the ordinances which symbolize at once your acceptance of the grace, and your acquiescence in the obligations !

XIV.

THE FOUNTAIN OPENED FOR SIN.

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.—ZECH. xiii. 1.

THE book of prophecy in which this promise occurs is one of the latest in the Old Testament Scriptures: and, as might be expected, the announcements of a coming redemption by those inspired men who flourished nearest to the time of the advent are remarkable for their clearness. Malachi, the very latest, foretells the coming of the Lord to His temple, and congratulates men on the rising of the sun of righteousness. Zechariah prophesies, in this chapter, of the man, Jehovah's fellow, against whom the command should go forth, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd"—words referred to by the Redeemer himself, on that night when he was betrayed into the hands of sinners: and, in the chapter immediately preceding, occurs that affecting prediction fulfilled in the hour of Christ's crucifixion, and so quoted by the evangelist, "They shall look on him whom they pierced." These prophecies standing so near to our text fix its meaning as beyond all doubt applying to the Gospel salvation. Spiritual and heavenly

blessings are mentioned in many a passage where the name of Christ does not literally occur; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. And since we are assured that to Him gave all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins (Acts x.), we are fully warranted to interpret the prophecy in our text of those provisions for the purifying and healing of the soul which were to depend on the Messiah's coming. The day so emphatically pointed to is the same whose glories the prophets so often expatiate upon; and the apostle Paul's comment on Isaiah's word "day" (2 Cor. vi. 2) equally assists in interpreting Zechariah's: for when directing his Corinthians to the address of Jehovah the Father to the Son—"In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee," the apostle immediately adds, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, . . . is the day of salvation"—thus identifying the day with the era of Gospel privilege continuously.

I. Let us, in dependence on God's guidance, consider man's spiritual necessity as here implied, and the adaptation to it of the provisions of grace.

II. Show what is meant by the opening of the *Fountain*, and especially in the Gospel day.

III. Who the persons are for whom these cleansing waters are intended, as described in the text—the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Such is the natural order of illustration; but we may usefully, in the present case, so far reverse the order, as to

treat the third head first: For, while the text speaks of something encouraging, it might appear as if the blessing, whatever it be, belonged to a very circumscribed class. Some may be ready to say, The prophet speaks indeed of a certain precious boon; but, if it be for the house of David, or for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, specially, what part have we in it? It is important, then, at the outset, to relieve the mind of the inquirer, by making clear the larger meaning of these expressions, or their wider application. Now, just as the prophets often point to a future day, meaning a future period or era, so, in describing the privileges of the Gospel, and the Gentile Church, they often employ a phraseology derived from their associations with the place and the people with which God set his name in the ancient times. David—need I say?—is another appellation for Christ, who was to come in David's line; and He is thus identified with David and David's throne, the better to keep in remembrance of the truth of God, and in expectation of the fulfilment of his promises. So, with the earthly Jerusalem, as a type of the Church in general, "the Jerusalem that is above, and is the mother of us all," is identified in Scripture style; reminding us that the Church of all ages is one, interested in one covenant, and holding of one Head and Redeemer. "Ye are come (Heb. xii.) unto Mount Zion," says Paul to the Christian Hebrews, "and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." He would teach us that, if only in Christ, we are "fellow-heirs, and of one spiritual body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel" (Eph. iii.) "To the house of David," then, is as if it

had been said by the prophet, "to the house of Christ; to the Church anywhere and everywhere calling on the name of the Lord." Every true member of Christ is a dweller in Jerusalem, in respect of a real participation in the blessing here foretold; yea, every one within the range of the valley of vision, if only a member of the Church visible, is, in respect of the privilege of access, included here.

Yet, while the words require this large interpretation, they are also unquestionably defining or limiting words. I mean, as against all who would undervalue God's light of revelation, and method of sovereign grace, these words teach us very plainly that in Judah is God's tabernacle,—in Zion is his seat: that salvation, though in no sectarian sense of the expression, is "of the church"—that we may not warrantably despise the ordinances, or convert the cheering truth, that wherever the spiritual worshipper is, there the Father accepteth him, into a ground for presuming on the general and uncovenanted mercy of God, to the neglect of the house of the Lord and his testimonies. These waters of life are everywhere represented as in connection with God's sanctuary—flowing forth from thence (Ezek. xlvii. ; Joel iii.) to refresh, and cleanse, and irrigate. There, "whither these waters come," and there alone, is the healing: the miry places being given to salt. The words of the text, then, when stretched to their largest meaning, still imply that we may not safely remain without the spiritual Jerusalem; that it is with a covenant God, the God of Abraham and of David, we may with confidence take to do. Of the stranger, though heretofore alienated from the covenants of promise, Jehovah says, in words of

large grace, "I will bring him;"—but it is "to mine holy mountain—for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."

II. The spiritual necessity here supposed, and the adaptation to it of the provisions of grace.

Under many various representations does Scripture set forth man's lost and helpless state. Now he is described as a wanderer from God: now as a captive of sin and Satan: again as one stricken with a moral malady—the whole head sick, the whole heart faint. It is yet another view which our text gives of his moral disability: he is unclean in God's sight—unfit for fellowship with the holy; and by heaven's righteous judgment debarred from such fellowship. The text, in distinguishing sin from uncleanness—though sin is itself uncleanness—suggests this twofold disability under which fallen man lies: guilt and internal depravation, rendering necessary the double cure—the twofold cleansing by the blood of Christ and by His Spirit. Both may be understood by the water: to both we find purification or cleansing ascribed. We read that the blood of Christ, God's Son, and because he is God's Son, cleanseth from all sin: that is, the poor soul, naked, polluted, ashamed to come before the Lord, finds in the Saviour's perfect purity and righteousness what emboldens it to draw nigh; His sinlessness avails the soul that is sinful; the sinner becomes righteous, being made the righteousness of God in Him.

And, as nothing less than the infinitely meritorious righteousness of the Saviour will avail to remove the legal

uncleanness or guilt, nothing less than the grace of the Spirit of Christ, or the washing of regeneration, will suffice to take away the moral stain from the soul itself, or cure the spiritual taint which vitiates the very nature to its core. Of all other processes for self-renovation, all ameliorations depending on the power of native virtue or the philosophies of earth, we may say in the language of Job, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me: For He is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and that we should come together in judgment." It is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" that can alone "make us free from the law of sin and death." It is He who can touch and renovate the secret springs of action. This is the water that can go deep into the soul, and flow forth in rivers of living, fertilising influence on the character and life.

And how suitably are the blood of Christ and the grace of His Spirit likened, not only to water, but to water at the fountain, or to the fountain itself! The ideas of fulness or sufficiency, of freeness of access, of permanency, of purity also, are implied:—fulness and permanency; the cistern may fail, but we expect the fountain to be perennial:—freeness; the well may be enclosed and appropriated, but we expect the fountain to be common: generally, at least, access is unrestricted; and, if the waters are healing as well as refreshing, reason revolts from the selfishness which would grudge their being available to all comers:—purity; the stream may in its course become turbid or muddy, but at the spring or source the waters are pure.

How answerable to expectation in all these particulars is this fountain for spiritual cleansing! What innumerable multitudes have proved its virtue, and still its efficacy is unimpaired! Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. How free of access *its* waters!—no money, no price! suited to all, necessary to all, the chief of sinners is not beyond the reach of their power to purify. Then how pure this fountain! I will sprinkle you, says Jehovah, with *clean* water (Ezek. xxxvi. 26). The blood that atones is the blood of God—the God-man—how can the water be but pure? The very humanity which suffered was spotless—and see how the apostle reasons on this ground for the efficacy of the sacrifice to purify as well as to atone; to atone God, and to cleanse the conscience: “If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” And how answerably perfect is the purification! “I will sprinkle *clean* water upon you,” says Jehovah, “and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, a new spirit will I put within you.”

There is a double cleansing necessary: first, then, the justification is perfect which is by faith in Christ: it is a justification, says an apostle, “from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” And shall not the Holy Spirit produce by that washing of regeneration which is attributed to Him, an effect worthy of

so mighty an agent? His name, said another apostle, speaking of a miracle of healing—the name of Jesus, through faith in His name, “hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all”—“perfect soundness!” which, in a sense, is applicable to the sanctification of the soul. No doubt sanctification is not, like justification, perfect at once. Yet it is a perfect, a divine work in its kind. The believer, cleansed, needeth not save to wash his feet: Pardoned all his sins as to the guilt of eternal wrath, he yet needs to sue for fatherly pardon for offences against a father’s law. He still requires, by renewed acts of faith in the blood of sprinkling, to cleanse his conscience, if he would sustain his peace; and so he needs, by the communion of the Holy Ghost, to heal it, to refine it, to perfect its perceptions, that he may approve the things that are excellent, that he may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. So long as in any degree moral corruption adheres to him, it is his privilege, as it is his duty, “to mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit.” But how sure is the result! Already free from the law of sin and death—the reigning power of sin—he is destined to be purified from its very being. Deep into his soul—we say again—go these cleansing waters; and the last stain shall be effaced; and every wrinkle as well as stain shall vanish—every effect of sin—every sorrow and pain: “All things shall be made new; He who loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, shall present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

III. It remains to consider the opening of the fountain; and specially in that day—the Gospel day.

It is not meant that the means of spiritual purification were unknown before. Like many other expressions of a similar kind, this is to be taken comparatively. Just as when it is said, “the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,” it is not meant that there was no grace,—no truth, before His advent: so neither did the virtue whether of Christ’s atoning blood or his sanctifying Spirit wait for the New Testament day. Who can doubt that patriarchs and prophets washed in this fountain? Did not David know of these cleansing waters, when he said, “Purge thou me, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than the snow”? Did not Job, who exclaims, “I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?” know of the Interpreter, one among a thousand? and does he not encourage others to seek to Him who can deliver from going down to the pit, and saith, “I have found a ransom?” Did Isaiah only proclaim to others?—were not he and the men of his day themselves concerned in the message, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool?” The very command, by Isaiah, “Wash ye, make you clean,” implies a knowledge of the waters. Truly, we may say, there was an opening of this fountain, when that first word and warrant of hope was pronounced in the garden of Eden; and our guilty progenitors were assured that one born of woman was to bruise the serpent’s head.

Nay, may we not go further back? Was not the promise of life in Christ Jesus in the eternal covenant the beginning of that flow of water from the throne of God and of the Lamb? Next, in the types and shadows of many ages; in the smitten rock, and the streams of water that followed the wandering hosts of Israel; in the manifold sacrifices and washings and sprinklings of the ancient law; grace was revealed, and order taken, to humble man indeed under a sense of his moral pollution, but withal to raise him from despair. But eminently in the day of Christ's manifestation; in his teachings grace was declared, and in his miracles betokened: Above all, it was in his death and blood-shedding that Divine love welled up and gushed forth. The blood and water that streamed from Christ's sacred side, pierced by the spear of the ruthless soldier, proclaimed not the fact alone that the Ransomer had died, but for what He died; told of man's needs, and the Saviour's sufficiency,—of reconciliation accomplished, and spiritual cleansing secured. Then, emphatically, the fountain was opened, as well as the way into the holiest made manifest; and, what but so many streams and conduits of the water of life do we recognise in the preaching of the apostles, in the descent of the Holy Spirit, in His power and demonstration attending the ministers of the word, in souls convinced, converted, healed? And has not that grace which was shed abundantly through Jesus Christ in the early time still accompanied the ministry of reconciliation? Wisdom has from age to age been justified of her children. A Lactantius could thus appeal to the heathen in his day: "Give me a man who is passionate, and by

the grace of God he shall be rendered as meek as a lamb. Give me a man who is covetous, and he shall be made liberal. Give me one who is unclean, by the grace of God he shall be made chaste." In fine, as long as this gospel is preached, and wherever it is preached, there flow those healing waters of the sanctuary; and they shall flow till the vision of the prophet shall be realised (Ezek. xlvii.) "He brought me to the door of the house . . . he measured a thousand cubits: and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." What is thus foretold in prophetic language may elevate our expectations of the latter-day glory of the Church, in a far wider spreading of the word of truth, and a richer experience of the power and presence of the Spirit of grace, changing the face of the earth, and filling it with the fruits of righteousness. It is truly significant that whereas everything is said to live, whither the rivers come, "the miry places and the marshes,"—it is added,—"shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt!"

No power but that of the Gospel is made mighty through God to convert the soul, or to moralise nations. The law is weak through the flesh: the lessons of earthly wisdom may exert a restraining influence on the outward habits of men; education may refine them: but grace alone can

heal the plagues of the heart ; and the word of the gospel is the honoured vehicle of the Spirit. Who would not rejoice then in anticipation of such enlargement of the kingdom of God as Ezekiel describes, or which Isaiah in still more rapturous terms foretells ?—"Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see ; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee : Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged ; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee" (Isa. lx.)

PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT.—The subject is fraught with instruction, comfort, warning, to every hearer of the Gospel.

Know your need of this grace, oh brethren. Avail yourselves of the provision : weigh your responsibility. The day here predicted has come. You live in its light. Though a continuous season, this day,—like every other day, the day of eternity excepted,—has its end as well as its beginning : Though running parallel with all the Christian ages, it is to the individual limited to the day of life.

Have you seen your need ? Have you felt oppressed with the thought of your guilt, and moral defilement ? If you would make sure work, beware of healing the wound slightly. Would to God we knew ourselves !—that, instead of comparing ourselves among ourselves, we brought ourselves into comparison with the pure and perfect law ! What a correction of false judgments would be the conse-

quence! What shame and self-loathing, where now there is content or boast! How much more appropriate would be found the prayer of the publican; yea, the cry of the leper; than the self-gratulation of the Pharisee! There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes,—says the wise man—yet are not washed from their filthiness. Listen to the words of a Job, an Isaiah, a Peter: Hear in them the confessions of heaven-taught souls on whom had beamed forth some rays of the holiness of the God of glory: “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.” “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

No: draw near, humble soul: it is not to repel you He stands beside these waters: it is to invite you. Yea, He stoops down; He girds himself as one who came not to be ministered to, but to minister; and says, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.” It is Christ’s work; yet so as that we earnestly put ourselves in His hands.

Does any inquire or hesitate, saying, “The well is deep—we would know what we must have wherewith to draw.” Believe: that is the cord—faith and the prayer of faith. Have faith in the sufficiency of the remedy: trust the sincerity of the Saviour, when He proclaims, or sends his servants to proclaim, “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,”—every one sick, defiled, let him come! Do appropriate the blessing by faith, and by the prayer

of faith. In that fountain filled with blood from Immanuel's veins, doubt not, oh sinner, that the guiltiest plunged may wash every stain away.

And as it would be a false humility to judge ourselves beyond the reach of this provision of abounding grace; so, on the other hand, let us not imitate the folly of the leprous Naaman in turning away from the appointed method of cure, because it is so much a method of grace—preferring some device of human wisdom to God's simple plan. "Behold, said he, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and do thus and thus—and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean?" "So he turned," says the historian, "and went away in a rage." It is against a like folly our Saviour guards us when He says, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." It was well for the Syrian courtier that listening to the remonstrance of his attendants, "If the prophet had bidden thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much more when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean," he obeyed, and went and plunged himself into the waters of Jordan seven times, so that "his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." So it is well, when the sinner forsaking his own devices for self-justification and for self-amendment, submits to the righteousness of God, and applies himself with all earnestness to the observance of God's appointments. With all earnestness, we say. It was not once, but seven times, Naaman was to dip himself in Jordan. And see in

the typical law how minutely those washings and sprinklings were prescribed in the case of the ceremonially unclean, or the desperately leprous: "the seven times" occurs there once and again; and see how the body, even to the tip of the finger, or the tip of the ear, was to be sprinkled. Let us learn that God's simple plan of saving us does not dispense with painful and solicitous application, yea, bespeaks the intense exertion of the spirit, and puts in requisition every faculty of the soul. Nor do they honour forgiving grace who hold themselves excused from the need—besides internal humiliation—of ingenuous and full confession of guilt, yea, and, on occasion, to man also. For I should not hesitate to tell the sinner, while I invite him to wash in these provided waters,—to wash himself, and make himself clean besides, in the manner described by the prophet Isaiah, (chap. i.), "put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil; learn to do well." Repenting truly of sin is one element of purification: and he is not pure before God, who, standing on the freeness of the Gospel pardon, cares not that some vice or evil passion still reigns within him; yea, or who cares not that a fellow-creature whom he has offended continues unacknowledged in his just claim for restitution, when it may be in the power of his hand to render it. The apostle bears this noble testimony to the sincere penitence of the Corinthians: "For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what cleansing of yourselves!" I do not take this to mean—what justifying of yourselves: which would be a contradiction; but rather full resolvedness to be right

with God and with conscience on the one hand, and on the other, with man, by ingenuous reparation of wrong, if wrong has been done, to fellow-creatures. A repentance which ignores this duty is of doubtful ingenuousness. Says a poet,—

“Pardon and penitence,
When they have done their utmost;
Still, in the distance far beyond, and out of reach,
Stands injury, unchang'd and changeless!”

The apostle adds, “Yea, what indignation, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what revenge!” against themselves is meant, just as “the clearing of yourselves” means, not self-justification, but thorough application of the blood of sprinkling, both for peace and for purity. And, as neither the freeness of grace, nor its cleansing virtue, supersedes solicitude on the part of the penitent to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; so no peace can be solid or enduring, if not sustained by a continuous faith in the Gospel promises, by which we are made partakers of the divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Finally, let us remind the free-thinker of what we urged in the beginning of the sermon as a lesson of the text before us, that free grace is not the same with universal grace. Nor is the salvation of Christ, wonderfully as it is adapted to men of every nation and character, on that account to be thought of as equally and alike sure to all modes of faith, and to any faith or none. Let him know that there is a God in Israel, or, as saith the prophet here, that the fountain opened is “to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

XV.

ADAM AND CHRIST—REIGN OF GRACE.*

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one ; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."—Rom. v. 17.

WHAT a cheering light does Scripture cast on the darkness of the human condition ! The passage before us, with its context, answers the question, How death has come into the world. The cause of our liability to the dissolution of this earthly tabernacle is sin : not to any seeds of decay and mortality sown in our nature originally is death to be traced, but to the violation of the covenant of God. With Adam as the root, the whole tree is smitten : and the apostle expresses the certainty and power with which the doom pronounced on man the sinner has taken effect, by these words, "Death has reigned by one."

But, blessed be God, Scripture does not leave us at this stage of our information. It tells us of the remedy as well as the disease—of that wondrous device of wisdom by which the calamity of our state has been retrieved ; yea, more than retrieved. For, the reasoning of the sacred writer implies that Divine mercy has taken occasion to manifest itself the more illustriously from the ruins of the Fall : as if sin had been permitted to enter, and death by

* Preached on occasion of the death of Rev. Professor Esson, in April 1853.

sin, as a foil to set off the great redemption, and the fruits accruing to the objects of redeeming love from the doing and the dying of the Son of God. He—the second man—has more than restored what was lost to those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness. Reverently looking for Divine guidance, let us—

I. Fix attention on the fact of a covenant of works having been made with our race, and on the effects of the breach of that covenant on the race universally. In Adam all sinned: in Adam all die. The "one man" is compared or contrasted with the second "one,"—the disobedience of the one with the righteousness fulfilled by the other. A holy God was pleased in sovereignty to deal with mankind by covenant. We may not question the wisdom or equity of the arrangement by which one was constituted the representative of many. We know that the Judge of all the earth must needs do right. It is with the fact we have to do; and the fact is stated clearly. The evidence of it lies in the universal reach of the penalty, to those who never sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Even little children—how are they seen to sicken and die, though free from actual sin, and therefore free from guilt, unless as identified with their first parent, and sharing as the represented in the sin and judgment of the representative!

And so death has come on all. Nor is it the death of the body only: not more certainly is the body affected than the soul. Nay, this is the chiefest death—not the extinction, but the depravation of the immortal spirit; the

loss of God's image in the higher part of our nature. This is as universal as the law of decay affecting the outward man. How sadly visible is the reign of this spiritual death! How does sin develop itself in the child of a few days! They go astray, soon as born, speaking lies: it is only more flagrantly developed in adult man. In all nations, everywhere, and in all times, it is the same: "The Lord looketh down from heaven, and beholdeth the sons of men: to see if there were any understood.—There is none righteous—no, not one: there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God." Whence the cry of oppression?—the song of the drunkard?—the reeling of the earth to and fro under its maddened inhabitants? Oh child of the dust, thou art merry in the valley of death, and deemest thyself free! What clouds thine understanding thus? What debases thine affections thus? Is God unworthy of thy love that thou refusest Him thy confidence? Is heaven so little desirable that thou renouncest it for the husks of earth? Art thou so contented with Satan as thy master; with hell as thy prepared place; that thou wanderest on, regardless of the voice of thy Father that calls thee back? This, this is the explanation: Death reigns; the vail is upon the heart; the face-covering is on the nations!

Lastly, Would we know the full import of death's reign, let us listen to the wailing in yonder unseen; let us realise the horrors of the place of despair. But who can realise them? Let inspiration itself put words upon what no imagination of man can conceive, nor pen describe, of "the worm that never dieth," of the fire that shall "never be

quenched." Oh, what is the death of the body to the death of the soul?—temporal death to eternal?—A soul not only without God, but contrary to God, and abiding under His curse for ever! Can words of man exaggerate the doom of which God Himself has thus spoken?—"they shall drink of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night." This is said eminently of those "who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (Rev. xiv.): but the terms are the same in effect with the language employed by the apostles elsewhere, and by the Saviour and Judge himself, with regard to every impenitent one, every one who knows not God, and who obeys not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (Mat. xiii. 50; xviii. 9; ix. 35; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9). Such are said to be condemned already. They die in their sins. The wrath of God abideth on them! Surely there is no straining in calling this spiritual death—the separation of the soul from God: this is death indeed! Nor does Christ use the word with less extension when He says of the believer, but only of him, that he shall not be condemned; but is passed from death to life. Thus the condemnation and the death are one: and justification and life one.

II. Let us turn then to this brighter side of the picture. Let us mark how the covenant of redemption more than

retrieves our loss: Even as Christ has said, I am come that they may have life, and that more abundantly. "If by one man's offence, death has reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

Let it be observed, it is of those "who receive" the gift this is affirmed. The question of universal or particular redemption is not involved here. A comparison is traced between the first and second Adam, in regard to their influence respectively, on as many as hold relation to them as representative heads. Universal terms are used in both cases: "the many" and "the all" are repeated to make emphatic the antithesis to "the one:" the point insisted on being, that each representative head affects the whole body of the represented: the entire seed of Adam in the one case, so death has come on the all: the entire seed of Christ in the other, so the all inherit eternal life. Indeed, for anything that is said here, the finally saved *may be* more in number than the finally lost; but neither is there ground in this passage for the assertion that the whole human race is redeemed by the second Adam. The question of numbers is not before the sacred writer. The very expression, "much more" precludes the idea: for, even were all men saved, the redeemed would not exceed in number those on whom, through Adam, judgment has come unto condemnation. The "abounding" and "the more" are to be understood, then, of the surpassing excellence of the benefit, not of the extent of its application: The obedience of the second Adam has availed to a far greater effect than simply retrieving their loss to those who are

saved at all;—securing justification, not from one offence, but from many offences, and investing every pardoned one with a title to eternal life more unalterable than that by which the first Adam held his primeval blessedness.

The text, in its various expressions, describes the salvation as well as the saved:—describes it in its grand characteristics—as a salvation flowing from grace as its source, through righteousness as its channel; and withal as in its kind excellent and glorious. Every word is rich in import: “grace,” and that abundant; “righteousness,” and that righteousness, “a gift;” life, and a “reign in life” by one, Jesus Christ. Cheering words indeed! Let the sinner take hope: Here is the antidote to all the evils of his state!—and let the saint come and drink again of the living water!

Salvation is here, we say, in its source—grace, free, sovereign, abounding:—free, that is uncaused, unmerited by any thing found in the vessels of mercy, “Not by works of righteousness — says the apostle — which we have done”:—sovereign, emanating from no necessity in the Divine nature, but according to the purpose of His own will. Grace chose the persons; grace found the Surety; grace applies the redemption as well as devised it; not only proffering the gift, but moving the soul to accept it; and no less securing to its objects the end of their faith in the complete salvation of their souls, than working in them to will and to do of God’s good pleasure.

2. “Through righteousness,” by one Jesus Christ—this is the channel. If it be inquired,—how is it by Jesus Christ? we answer, it is by Him as the Mediator of the

new covenant, who has fulfilled its condition, and to whom, as the representative of a ransomed world, the promises were eternally made. It is on the footing of His obedience as the second Adam the many are made righteous. Jehovah would manifest Himself a just God while justifying the ungodly; but this He could not have been seen to be, had He not, in exercising His mercy, maintained the honour of His law. God is holy; He cannot look on sin. Sin committed inferred suffering, and sin committed against an infinitely holy God required a sufferer infinite. Behold here righteousness and peace meeting together! No letting down the claims of Heaven's law; rather shall the Lawgiver Himself, in the person of the Son, stoop to obey it. Eternal life, though a free gift, comes in a channel so holy, that the condition of the covenant lacks not its fulfilment; yet so that the righteousness wrought out for us, and brought in, is itself a gift as really as is the life.

3. Can we wonder, then, if in its matter the life itself be glorious, sure in its tenure, eternal in its duration: "shall reign in life"? The expression is evidently one of contrast with the "reign of death." The remedy is illustrated, in its certainty and efficacy, by the ruin. We see how God's word of threatening has stood true; with what undeviating constancy the decree of death takes effect! Who can retain the spirit in the day of the spirit? But, alike—who shall hinder the decree of mercy? Grace "reigns" no less resistless: no opposition from earth or from hell shall avail to hinder the blessing, even as all the cavillings and questionings of finite wisdom have failed to hinder the condemnation or curse. Life—how full of

meaning this word! and “reign in life”—how expressive of certainty and continuance! Blessed in its kind—a life in God’s favour, justification of life,—a standing accepted in the beloved: a life of sanctification also—a new spiritual being with new capacities of enjoyment, and new capabilities of action, begun in regeneration by the spirit, continued by the faith of the Son of God, consummated in glory! Blessed in its continuance as well as in its nature! They “shall reign in life,” says our text. No element of decay inherent in this new existence; no power from without capable of extinguishing it. The death of the body shall not affect it: death but transports to a higher life—the soul but begins to live more truly. The vicissitudes of time shall not affect it; for when ages shall cease to be numbered and time shall be no more; when the revolutions of sun, moon, and stars, shall have ceased; the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Purified from sin’s last dregs; Satan bruised under their feet; the world, with all its sorrows, seen behind in the distance; they shall have entered on a rest that is perfect and glorious, enhanced by all the toils of the way: as kings and overcomers, “they shall inherit all things!”

III. We said the question of numbers is not implied in the apostle’s comparison. But have we yet explained how it is that a greater efficacy is affirmed on the side of the new covenant? The apostle but hints at the grounds of his conclusion, rather than argues it explicitly. He contrasts Christ with Adam; obedience with

disobedience; condemnation with justification of life. Then, may not the ground of the "much more" lie in such considerations as these following?—

1. The first Adam was a mere man, the second is the Lord from heaven. If the earthly has so influenced our state, how shall not the heavenly? If our relation to one who was but a living soul has been fraught with results so far reaching, what may not be expected to come of a relation, alike close and alike real, to Him who is a quickening spirit?

2. If one act of the one man—a single instance of disobedience—has been so fruitful of eventful issues, what may be expected from the many acts, an entire course of unfailing obedience, by the second man? If so much has followed from the act of a creature, what shall not come from the continuous service and suffering of the Creator?

And may we not add?—

3. If a holy God, in pursuance of the claims of righteousness, has with so undeviating purpose fulfilled the work of judgment—His strange work—how much more may we look for glorious developments, where grace, prompted by no necessity, seeks a sphere for its manifestation, for the very end of showing to the ages to come the exceeding riches of that grace, in "the kindness of God towards us through Christ Jesus;" where also every hindrance to its honourable manifestation has been taken out of the way! Surely the good pleasure of His goodness who delighteth in mercy will abound beyond the measure of His holy severity! Surely the river that flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb will superabound in the depths of its flow throughout its appointed sphere,—filling in no

stinted measures the vessels of mercy! And the necessary exactions of strict law will be outrun by the profuseness of spontaneous love!

APPLICATION.—(1.) We may reflect, How little reason has man to complain of the equity of God's ways! In the absence of the light, had it been withheld, which He has been pleased to cast on the darker of his dispensations, it would have become us to say, "Even so, Father: for so it has seemed good in thy sight." But here we have seen that the entrance of moral evil has not been without its countervailing advantages; and they, at least, to whom so glorious a remedial scheme has been revealed, may sing of mercy more than of judgment.

Yet (2) our sentiments towards God should ever unite reverence of His terrible works with thankful appreciation of His mercy. In remembrance of the death and condemnation escaped from, in the view of the entirely gratuitous life, but its glorious nature withal; how may the most sanctified be humble, and the most happy and assured join trembling with his mirth!

Lastly, if so much depends on union with the Saviour in the bonds of a true faith, how does it concern us to submit ourselves to the righteousness which is of faith; and that without delay! Strange that, with the priceless boon within our reach, so many of us should be content to postpone the question of safety for eternity! Is it indeed the very greatness of the gift and its freeness that makes us hesitate and delay, as if the good news were too good to be true? Yet we believe—for we see—that that appalling

thing, death, has come ; of which, if we had not witnessed *its* reign, we might as much have doubted that ever it should be permitted to overrun this fair world, and include in its devastations the mightiest and the meanest, the wisest intellectually and the most untutored or imbecile. Oh, the lesson of our text is,—hasten, secure the boon for which divine truth is pledged by all that has been experienced of God's holy severity ! In vain your covenants with death ; your agreement with hell : the hail shall sweep away every refuge of lies. Yet, with all that the word sets before us of life and death—with all that every day reminds us of, as to the suddenness with which the thread may be snapped asunder whereby we hold aught that is between us and death,—what thousands procrastinate, neither awed by threatenings nor allured by the promises ! They **know they** are accountable : they know that one life only is theirs, one opportunity. They walk among the graves of the dead, and the beds of the dying : yet the smile of indifference plays upon their countenance, the language of frivolity fills up their conversation, the schemes of time engross their thoughts ; neither the charms of heaven's grandeur, nor the terrors of the place of woe, avail to waken them from their dream !

It is well when they who thus trifle, and especially who falsely imagine that to be serious is weakness, can be referred to the earnestness with which men of highly cultivated intellect are seen now and again to cling in their departing hours to the gospel of Christ, and to find rest for their souls, after all they have known

and proved of the secrets of wisdom, in the righteousness of the Saviour, and the promises of Him who cannot lie.

The latest event indeed was not so strikingly sudden ; though the end of a long illness in the case of our departed friend, Professor Esson, came with somewhat of an unexpected rapidity, and so far we were taken, here also, by surprise. I had the satisfaction to be present with the deceased at the solemn moment when the spirit was taking its departure, and joined with the near and dear relatives in commending him to the Saviour in whom he trusted. I had again and again offered prayer with him previously, not without the impression that he was a dying man. He is gone ! and the cordial regret simultaneously uttered by a large circle of friends, bears testimony to the void which his death is felt to have made in the community, and to the high esteem which his dispositions and virtues had secured for him in the hearts of his fellow-citizens.

Mr. Esson was one whom it was impossible to know and not to love ; for the noble simplicity and ingenuousness of his temper and manners, united with an ardour of spirit which he carried into his professional pursuits, rendering his congenial studies a source of constant enjoyment to himself, and enabling him to interest the hearts as well as minds of students in comparatively abstract speculations ; but which never kindled into more fervent enthusiasm, than when his mind dwelt, in the course of his private conversation, or public prelections, on the practical tendencies and prospective issues of the labours of studious men and philanthropists, in accelerating the diffusion of

universal happiness, and ameliorating the condition, physical or moral, of the human race.

I have seldom, if ever, known a man more ingenuous ; more superior to whatever is mean or sordid in intention, or sinister and intriguing in mode of action ; or with whom it was more manifest that views of personal interest, ambition of power, and love of popularity, were not the principles that held sway with him in council or in conduct, in public affairs. Whether you agreed with him in sentiment, or whether you differed, you found in him, in the one case, a hearty and honest associate, or, in the other, a liberal and magnanimous opponent.

The deceased was long engaged in the ministry in Montreal. Nine years ago, at the commencement of Knox' College, in this city, he threw himself with all his ardour into the work assigned to him, of directing the studies of youths intending for the holy ministry, especially in the preliminary department of their training. And not more by his intellectual than by his moral influence, by his professional exertions than by his truly paternal interest in those committed to his charge, did he contribute to form the minds of a considerable proportion of our candidates, and attach to himself the confidence of one and all as to a familiar friend. I have had the best opportunity of witnessing the earnestness with which he sought to impress a reverence for the word of God on his pupils, and to commend to them the dictates of its Divine wisdom, as the ultimate rule and arbiter in all philosophic investigations. I believe he derived his chiefest enjoyment in the study of man—his favourite study—from the opportunity it gave

him of admiring and commending the Divine Author of all his mental and moral adaptations. He lived in a region of lofty contemplation, in which, as he retired within himself, he not only might seem to withdraw himself from the excitements of passing events,—having no heart for the turmoils of petty strife, and his talents not lying in the capacity for details in business—but he might seem even in a degree unsocial; not because he was austere, but because his mind was prone to abstraction. Yet he was far from being without the social feeling, any more than indifferent to public interests. He loved his friends; he looked forth from his retirement with complacency and benevolence on all men; and when he allowed himself to relax in conversation, young and old alike listened delighted to the overflowings of his affectionate heart; the utterances which indicated, without ostentation, the richly furnished mind, trained to habits of observation and sagacious reflection. His habits of abstraction, therefore, had nothing of the morose; and I think it was because his mind was possessed of the peace of the Gospel, and imbued with the love of God, as well as provided with the stores of philosophical and historical lore, that he was so uniformly happy, alone or with others; as the good man is said to be “satisfied from himself.”

The latest hours of our departed friend were in harmony with the habits of his life. It was not simply the favour of God, but the likeness of God, that his soul aspired after; it was not merely the more selfish question of safety that exercised his spirit—though that is itself a great and important question; and he gave indications, in his expres-

sions, of a contrite and humble mind conversant with godly sorrow ; he loved to hear of the gracious covenant, and of the everlasting righteousness of the Mediator. But, with a mind at rest in the faith of Christ, he dwelt in love as one dwelling in God ; and, I believe, that in his view of heaven itself, he looked not so much at the idea of being free from all the ills of life, or possessed of self-gratifying joys, as at the end to which salvation itself is the means, in a closer communion with the Father of spirits, and a larger participation of the Divine nature.

How mysterious is the Divine Providence !—But a short while ago, his name was selected as among the likeliest candidates for a newly erected chair in our university. I can bear witness to the equanimity with which he received the notification, and waited for the issue. It has pleased God to assign to him a translation of a different kind ; but it is not without satisfaction that his many friends can reflect that a long life of educational service did not close without this testimony rendered, with very general concurrent suffrages, to Mr. Esson's learning and his merits as an instructor of youth.

There is reason to think that the rapid decay of his strength latterly, was the effect, to a large extent, of long-continued mental application.—Ungrudgingly these labours were given ; but they are of a kind (and it is not always allowed for or understood) to wear out the frame, independently of any organic disease seizing on the vitals.—The intellectual anxieties which a keen imagination, and a tender texture of the nervous system, produce, press formidably on both the mind and body. The sword may

prove too sharp for the scabbard; and it is affecting to witness the prostration of the finest powers, yielding, not without resistance from their natural buoyancy, to the stern progress of the destroyer; overcome by the exhaustion which was induced by their very great vigour and activity!

Truly all things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. Knowledge itself vanisheth away; yet not that knowledge which wrought love—"charity never faileth."—Though all flesh is grass, and the goodliness of man is as the flower of the field, the word of the Lord, in itself and in its subjective effects in the soul, endureth for ever. They who have known and loved spiritually shall know and love yet more and more. Death is not the extinction of thought: it but enlarges the sphere of vision; and at the fountain, far more than at the streams, shall the happy spirit quaff unceasing draughts of intellectual gratification, and find ever-increasing aliment for its ever-enlarging desires. "I shall behold thy face in righteousness, and be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." "The Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

XVI.

THE DUTY OF MOURNING FOR THE SINS OF A LAND.

"Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof."—EZEKIEL ix. 4.

WE can hardly open any of the books of ancient prophecy or sacred history, without seeing the connection between sin and misery affectingly illustrated. Here, as by a light from heaven, we may learn to trace and explain the *moral* causes at least of those great national catastrophes, whose peculiar character or suddenness of occurrence baffles the skill of the mere philosopher to account for them. For, let us not think that what is recorded of God's dispensations towards his ancient church and people, or of the rise and fall of other communities whose history is interwoven with theirs, has ceased to be applicable as a rule, for enabling us to judge of His dispensations towards the church and nations of New Testament times. "These things," we are expressly informed, "happened for ensamples: and are written for our admonition on whom the ends of the world are come." The great and prominent lessons of sacred history can never grow obsolete. In all that concerns the moral duty of men, the rights of the Creator and the responsibility of the creature, mankind are under the,

same law now as ever they were. Experience and observation confirm those scripture principles which, on the other hand, best interpret passing events. As formerly, so now, it may be seen that righteousness is the strength of a nation, and sin is the reproach and ruin of any people. As then, so now, judgments long deferred come at length. As then, so still, God shows himself sovereign and all powerful in the choice and use of the various instruments of accomplishing his purposes. Now, as of old, judgments often come suddenly, and find men variously affected by them: and would to God there were not reason to add, that the disposition to deny the divine agency—to look away from the first to second causes—to say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not, is as common with a large proportion of observers as ever!

Ancient scripture is profitable for consolation as well as for direction and reproof. Was it not to encourage the fearers of God in all times of calamity that this vision of Ezekiel was recorded? Here mercy goes forth with truth. The command to seal and spare His own accompanies the command to slay utterly those whose sins had ripened them for destruction. Can we affirm, then, absolutely that such distinctions and exceptions are always made in the day when the Almighty visits nations or cities in his anger? We cannot. Even under the Old Testament, such distinctions were not always made: the righteous so far suffered with the wicked; but, sure we are, they suffered not as the wicked. Often God wonderfully interposed in behalf of his true people; and, where He permitted them to be in any measure involved in the common

danger or adversity, yet was it ever true that, while the "wicked was driven away in his wickedness, the righteous had hope in his death." And so is it still: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." He may altogether hide them in the day of his anger; or He may appoint as a salutary trial to them what He sends in wrathful judgment upon others. Certain we are now as ever that ill men's rod shall not rest on the lot of the righteous; and that God seals his own; that under the watchful and tender guardianship of Christ, who seems to be represented in the preceding verse by the man clothed with linen, (fit emblem of our High Priest and Intercessor, the Holy One of Israel), they are marked out from the others, to be spared from the adversity altogether, or, however, to be comforted in it, and purified by it:—their afflictions sent as blessings; their death precious in His sight. "Lo," said Balaam, "the people shall dwell alone:" We see it accomplished. In this life as well as in the next, religion has its rewards. Who would not wish to enjoy that signal protection of the Almighty; to be safe from the fear of evil; to know that although a thousand may fall at our right hand, or ten thousand at our left, it shall not come nigh to us; or, though the waters swell up to the brim, they shall not overwhelm us? Let us learn the character of these blessed persons: it is as peculiar as their privilege. The Old Testament unites with the New. The Lord speaks here in vision, as he afterwards did when manifested in the flesh: "Blessed are they that mourn." How different is the judgment of men from the judgment of God! These were persons who, it

may be presumed, in such degenerate times were reviled and despised. They may have been accounted as very fanatics, persons needlessly rigid and precise,—ever looking at the dark side of things! “If they will be so very religious,—said the scoffer,—yet why so much ado about it? If they will vex themselves for their own sins, yet why will they bewail and reprove ours, who desire not their counsel, and need not their pity?” Ah, let us hear the voice of Jehovah, and let it correct our estimate of things. “Go,” said He, “through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.”

It is usual in Scripture to describe the whole of religion by some one of its parts. Sometimes faith includes all, because, in truth, it is the grand first principle of all acceptable obedience and worship: Sometimes, the fear of God, because to a holy reverence of the divine authority everything else may be reduced. Here the objects of the divine favour are characterised as mourners, though not to the exclusion of the other elements of religious character, nor incompatibly with their possession of that content and happiness of mind elsewhere affirmed of all the true circumcision. “They rejoice in Christ Jesus, as well as have no confidence in the flesh.” Godly sorrow is perfectly consistent with spiritual joy; yea, is even a means of promoting it; and it has no necessary connection with morbid melancholy. But, this will appear more fully while I go on, in dependence on the divine blessing, First, to press the cultivation of this genuine sorrow for abounding *sin* as

a reasonable duty : secondly, as a test of a high style of Christian character : and, thirdly, as having manifold advantages attending it.

I. It is a duty highly reasonable. The contrite who tremble at God's word are, indeed, first and mainly engrossed with the thought of their own sins. But that they should take a more enlarged concern, and lay deeply to heart the sins of their time and their country, is agreeable to every view of their character and obligations. Why does sin cause grief to the mind of the spiritually enlightened man at all? It is not merely on account of its present bitter consequences ; still less is it only for its bitter consequences to himself. He has discovered how hateful it is to the pure and holy Being whom he is now taught to love—how contrary to His nature,—how derogatory to His glory. Even the believer's saving apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ has made sin the more odious and malignant in his estimation, as committed against a gracious benefactor, whom he feels it would be ungenerous as well as unreasonable to disobey, and to whose long-suffering and beneficence the very wicked owe so large a debt of gratitude. But, if the honour and glory of God are now so much more precious to him, surely he must feel that these are affected, not by his own sins alone, but by the sins of others also. If his own sins only should in this light be grievous to him, might there not be ground to suspect that his repentance or contrition is founded on selfish principles, and has more respect to the personal benefit to be expected than to the character and authority

and claims of the Lawgiver? Again, is not the Holy Spirit given to every believer? Does He not shed abroad the love of God in the heart? Ought not this union and communion with God to evince itself in a conformity of nature,—in a sympathy of views and sentiments? Is not the Spirit of God grieved by sin—by all sin? And how can prevailing visible iniquity, in whatever quarter, be viewed by him in whom the Spirit dwells but with lively emotion and concern? In fine, if the love of man be an accompaniment of the love of God, and if he who has tasted the sweetness of being forgiven, as well as the pain of being alarmed, cannot but desire the safety and happiness of all others; then, on this ground also, godly sorrow for the sins that prevail around, is, as well as grief for his own, a duty most reasonably incumbent on every Christian. “The wages of sin is death,” as really in the case of others as, but for a gracious interposition, it would have been in his own. Abiding in unbelief they are abiding under condemnation: and can he, without grief of heart, behold men ripening for everlasting burnings? Is it not reason enough for the Christian to fast and mourn for them that they are not mourning for themselves? Shall he, unaffected, see them sporting when they should weep? or, with such impressions as he has of the power of that wrath they have not escaped, behold them trampling under foot the Son of God, treating the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace? Shall temporary suffering call forth sympathy? Will men sympathise with others in their reverses of fortune, their fits of sickness and pain?—and shall not the Christian

mourn, when he beholds disease preying on men's souls, and heaven lost to them? shall he not weep in secret places over their eternal ruin? The loss of one individual soul is incalculable, because the soul is of itself of infinite value; yet, what crowds of thoughtless immortals are rushing on towards an eternal world, heedless and fearless; as if to meet God were nothing, and as if to brave His everlasting displeasure were nothing! Surely, when one contemplates but slightly the truth here, the wonder is that men enlightened and awakened, to whom the glory of God has been revealed, and in whose eyes all things are loss compared with the kingdom of heaven, can look on so calmly,—do not sigh and cry more bitterly—do not say with the Psalmist: "Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law,"—do not exclaim with the Prophet: "Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" Which brings us,—

II. Secondly, to urge this as a test of the higher style of Christian character. We have been vindicating it as reasonable: does not the rare degree in which such a spirit prevails rather need to be vindicated? But, it cannot.

It may be observed that while the elements of such grief for sin must and do exist in every renewed soul,—for they who have looked to Jesus cannot but mourn—it is found specially to have marked the character of distinguished saints. And the peculiar emphasis with which,

both in our text and elsewhere, it is noticed as an object of Divine approbation, seems to indicate that a goodly progress must have been made in the life of godliness ere the soul shall expand with these generous sympathies, or the heart be touched in any great degree with interests so remote from the selfish. The Holy Spirit convinces every Christian of sin; but it is when He is poured out in grateful showers that the heart is truly enlarged. The mind of the anxious inquirer, on being first awakened, is engrossed with the great question of personal salvation,—what shall I do to be saved? Yea, after some progress has been made in the business of personal religion, if still assurance is yet to seek, it is perhaps to be expected, though not to be justified, that the Christian should feel as if to meditate much on the Divine glory as affected by the sins of mankind generally, or on the precise relation in which nations and churches stand to God, were to engage in things too high for him. A false modesty may even shrink from it as presumptuous to concern itself deeply with what may be termed public sins: and charity may interpret the duty of hiding the multitude of (others') sins, as requiring one's turning from the sight of them entirely.

But, let us hear the Psalmist: "I beheld transgressors, and was grieved!" It may be remarked of the psalms of David that, resembling the progress of the Christian himself, they consist much in their earlier parts of prayer, in the latter more of praise. And, this also I would remark, that they bear this character of mature and elevated piety stamped upon them, that they exhibit the workings of a mind deeply exercised in reference to abounding evils, and

of a spirit burdened on account of whatever of darkness, and error, and depravity, he beheld in his days and in his country. We may observe the same thing in the Apostle Paul: Highly sanctified by Divine grace, what tenderness of spirit distinguished him! what holy jealousy and fear for others! How deeply humbled and bowed down by every symptom of backsliding in churches or individuals! what trembling solicitude for the honour of the gospel of Christ! "Who was weak, and he was not weak? who was offended, and he burned not?" Did he see transgressors unaffected themselves with their guilt and danger? this was reason enough to him for fasting and mourning on their account: "I fear," says he to the Christians at Corinth, "lest when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed."

Shall I remind you of Lot, whose righteous soul was vexed from day to day with the unlawful deeds of his people? Shall I remind you of Moses, how he fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, oppressed with holy shame for his nation's perfidy? Shall I remind you of Eli, more broken in spirit because the Ark of his God was taken, and the glory had departed from Israel, than because his sons had fallen in battle? Shall I remind you of Josiah, whose tender heart melted within him when he thought of the judgments of heaven, which ages of crime had accumulated on his kingdom?—or Of Ezra, of Nehemiah, of Jeremiah, of Daniel? What characterised these holy men the most?—was it not their public spirit?

—their concern for the glory of God—their grief for prevailing sins, and the abominations of their land? Shall I, in short, remind you of our highest pattern—of Jesus who wept over the obstinate unbelief of his countrymen according to the flesh, and over the prospect of their rueful destiny? Surely, these examples combine to reprove us, that this is so little our habit of mind—that we rise so little above our own concerns—that we can look on, so unaffected and unappalled at sin, even in those gross forms in which it is every day meeting our eyes in our country and cities: contenting ourselves, it may be, with a passing remark—a goodly sentiment; but not caring to make common cause with the Saviour, to burden ourselves with what burdens Him, or to humble ourselves for those who will not be humbled!

Brethren, I press this as a test of a heart truly sanctified—if not of the being of piety, of its healthfulness. Where are our sighs and cries?—our earnest supplications and remonstrances? What place hears our pleadings, our wrestlings? or sees our mourning, our fasting? It may be true, we concern ourselves with our personal sins, and rightly these call first for self-prostration at the throne: it may be we go beyond ourselves, and mourn over loved friends—their neglect of our counsels, their unmercifulness to their souls. But do we not too easily put away from ourselves the responsibility as to other's conduct and destiny?—Do we grieve how God is thus wronged in His own world—far beyond the range of the little circle in which self so much entwines itself with our sympathies? As we look on, too easily we solace ourselves with the

consideration, We are not to blame: it is not our affair. That may defend us from the more direct responsibility; but does it vindicate the Divine glory? does it save the misery of your fellow creatures?

The influence of this narrowness of mind, as it may be called, is often to be traced in the indifference, on the one hand, with which even religious persons can look on abuses that may be prevailing in the social system, civil or sacred, and that are productive of great crime as well as great misery; willing, it would seem, to risk everything rather than change; or, not troubling themselves to look so far as to the remote causes of the effects they deplore: on the other hand, in the quicksightedness of many to discover and call for the rectification of bad laws, or injurious customs, affecting their temporal interests; while they can behold unmoved the defilement of God's sanctuary, or hear the profanation of His name and denial of His truth, without one sigh of grief, or one prayer for the reviving spirit of the Almighty. How is the temper of the men of Amos' days reproduced in other ages—and now? "That lie in beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, . . . that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."

III. An enlarged concern on serious minds because of abounding irreligion and immorality is advantageous.

God is honoured by it; for though our grief cannot expiate guilt, and there is no merit in the most fervent contrition to constitute a pleadable right to mercy, for

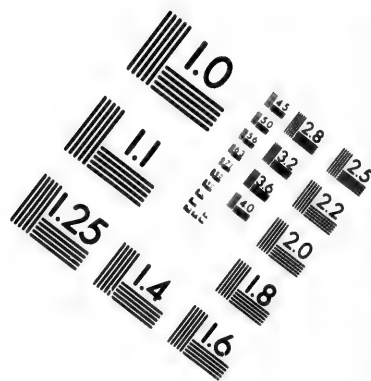
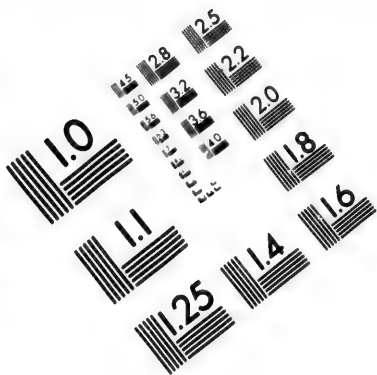
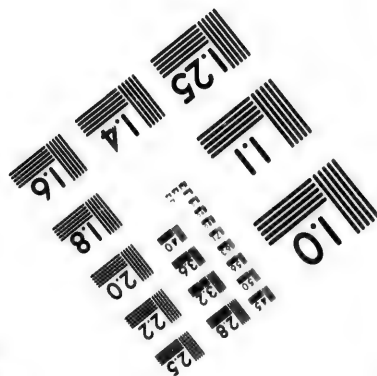
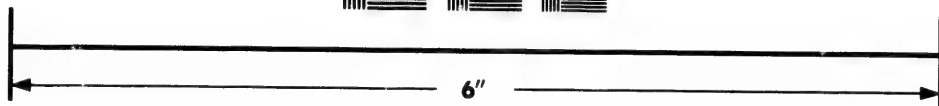
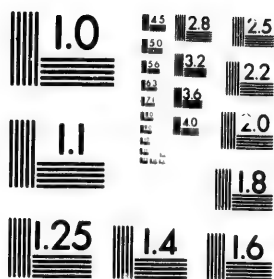


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ourselves or for others ; yet in a certain sense it redresses the wrong which the divine character and the divine glory had sustained. I mean, it counterbalances, by the praise which thus redounds to God, what sin has kept back from the revenue of his praise. Every sin is an offence against one or another of Jehovah's attributes, indeed against all. It challenges his justice : it disparages his wisdom ; it defies his power. On the other hand, by the grief of those to whom the reproach of Zion is a burden, and by their humble confessions, God is justified when he judgeth : His insulted perfections are, in some corresponding measure to that in which they have been injured, honoured and exalted. Thus, as the apostle delighted to think of the gifts of Christian beneficence as not only ministering directly to the wants of the saints, but as abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God ; so the Christian, while he remembers that the blood of Christ alone can expiate the sins of an individual or of a nation, may delight to reflect that what is lacking to the praise of the divine perfections, what disparagement is cast upon them by the transgressions of the many, is, in some measure, counterbalanced by the humiliation, the tears, the prayers of the few. "I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly," saith Jehovah. So we add,—

It is advantageous to Christians themselves. Besides having the promise of the divine protection (as in our text) it has a happy influence on their minds. It tends to keep them in a watchful frame and contrite. It excites to prayer. It carries with it the gratifying evidence of their union with God, and their fellowship of sympathy with

Him in their aims and ends. It is fitted to stir up to earnest efforts to promote the work of revival.

And, therefore, I add,—It is advantageous as concerns our fellow-creatures. Why are we so inactive in putting forth efforts to save them? Why are we so little inventive in methods of arresting their attention, restraining their wickedness, encouraging their holy purposes? Why so backward to warn, exhort, and reprove them? Doubtless, because we lay so little to heart their danger, their guilt,—the injury done against the divine law by their sins,—the glory that would redound to God by their repentance. Nor can I omit the direct benefits that may result to society, from even a part of its members standing in the breach deprecating God's judgments, while bearing on their spirits the causes of God's controversy with their land. I have said that grief cannot atone for sin, nor repentance merit divine favour. Yet, as in a certain sense, it redresses the loss to the revenue of God's praise, so has it also—even the humiliation of the few, yea, of one,—warded off calamity; stayed the arm,—shall I say?—of the destroying angel! Can I forget how the zeal of Phinehas is said by the Almighty to have turned away His anger, and arrested the pestilence in its course? Can I forget how Jehovah condescended to treat with Abraham concerning the cities of the plain, nor ceased promising before Abraham had ceased to plead? Were not Job's prayers heard for his three friends rather than their own? Shall I remind you how Josiah, in humbling himself before the Lord, prevailed by his tears and supplications, to avert the threatened indignation, for a season? And do we not find

Jehovah complaining, by the prophet, that when He sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before him for the land, that He should not destroy it; He found none? (Ezek. xxii. 30.)

Times there are, indeed, when the sins of a country have so filled up its cup, that no prayers of those that sigh and cry because of the abominations shall hinder the infliction of judgment. So the Almighty declares in one place: "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." But at least, even then, it is promised, as in our text also, they shall deliver their own souls; not by virtue of their prayers, or their righteousness as in itself meritorious, yet as their reward of grace; honoured as His praying ones are to hold up the plea which God will ever regard, derived from his manifested mercy in Christ; and as a certain providential protection is, in the connection of his gifts and blessings, made to attend on repentance, and reformation, and godliness.*

* This sermon was preached in Glasgow, in 1832, on occasion of a public calamity.

XVII.

THE MYSTERY—CHRIST IN US.

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles ; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory : Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom ; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus : whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."—COL. i. 27-29.

THESE words bring impressively before us the great object of the Gospel ministry, or the subject with which it is conversant ; and, as exemplified by the apostle here, the spirit of earnestness and conscientiousness befitting the sacred trust.

We may profitably, in dependence on God's blessing, apply our minds to both these topics of meditation.

I. The subject. Who may not see that it is something of which the apostle's mind was full ; something for which, in the consciousness of having received it by revelation from God, he with authority claims the attention of men ; and, in the knowledge of whose intrinsic value to all, he felt it incumbent on him to promulgate it everywhere ; uncompromisingly setting himself against all schemes of earthly wisdom by which the designs of heaven might be

hindered, or the light of revelation darkened? Ver. 24—“Who now (says he) rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church”—(meaning, of course, by “what is behind” no part of Christ’s expiatory suffering, but that of suffering by which the sanctification of the mystical body is perfected in fellowship with its head): “Whereof,” he adds, “I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.”

We cannot acquiesce in the bald and meagre interpretation—as it appears to us—which has been put by some on the word “mystery,” as if that word never in the New Testament meant what is above our comprehension, but means only what has not before been revealed. A definition so general removes—it seems to us—all emphasis from an expression evidently meant to be emphatic. Why; creation itself—at least, the creation of all things out of nothing, and by the word of God,—might be called a mystery according to this definition, as really as the scheme of redemption: why, then, so emphatically appropriated to the Gospel truth? No doubt, in this passage, and in one or two more, the word stands in close connection with the subject of the extension of the Gospel among the Gentiles, which, in distinction from the more limited sphere of the Israelitish dispensation, might be called a new development of the divine purpose. “If ye have heard,” says the apostle to the Ephesians, “of the dispen-

sation of the grace of God which is given to me to you-ward; how that by revelation he made known to me the mystery:" and, again,—“Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” These passages, and one in the epistle to the Romans, do, it must be acknowledged, connect “the mystery” closely with the fact of the introduction of the Gentiles into the Church of God; yet still—and I am happy to be confirmed in my view by some of our soundest commentators—it is not the fact alone of the extension of the gospel, in distinction from the previous concealment of this purpose, that constitutes the mystery: it is the thing revealed; it is the Gospel itself; the great purpose of saving sinners of mankind by the humiliation and death of the Son of God—a purpose alike wondrous in the eyes of the enlightened Jew and Gentile, for the manifold wisdom of God which it unfolds, and bringing into view a “love that passeth knowledge.” The judicious Tholuck, avoiding the rashness and dogmatism with which some other critics have attached the one exclusive signification to the term, includes in his definition what is inaccessible to reason, or even, when known as a fact, transcends the comprehension of reason in the mode of the fact. So also, Olshausen sees, in what the apostle calls the mystery, the wondrous thing revealed, not merely the revelation;—called “the mystery among the Gentiles,” because its ap-

pearance among them was the "sharpest contrast to the deep shade"—(of their moral condition, he means).

Our argument briefly in favour of a larger meaning of the term is this: If the mere fact of the extension of the Gospel were the mystery, as brought to light in the latter ages, how is it that the ancient Scriptures are so full and clear upon the matter, that when Paul demands, Did not Israel know? he answers the question by saying that the prediction of the accession of the Gentiles was as old not as Isaiah only, but as David, and even Moses—pervading the psalms and prophecies: that in Christ's name the Gentiles should trust; and by a strange people Israel should be moved to jealousy? It is true that to the Jewish mind, largely, the fact of the extension of the covenant blessing on equal terms to Jew and Gentile was a thing hidden, so that a special revelation was necessary to reconcile one apostle to this part of the Divine economy. But the great apostle Paul, in those animated references to the secrets of Divine wisdom, is not surely giving such importance to the bigotry of the Hebrew: he is looking far higher. It is not the newness of the revelation; it is the strangeness, rather, of the matter revealed. He insists on the contrast between the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God; the incapacity and indisposition not of the Jewish mind alone, but of the natural mind, to give ready entertainment to this great evolution of the Divine counsels.

And, then, see how in the very passage immediately before us, the apostle is looking to the intrinsic quality of the gospel message. He speaks not only of the mystery,

but of the glory, nay, "the riches of the glory" of this mystery, and proceeds to apply the term, in brief, to Christ himself, or the doctrine concerning Christ;—here indeed not to the objective doctrine so much, but the method of its subjective manifestation in the soul;—Christ in you the hope of glory. Christ "among you," some have rendered these words; but the true meaning is fixed by parallel expressions; such as, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"—"Abide in me, and I in you:" nor can it be made intelligible how "Christ, among them" only, could give to individuals the hope of glory. Neither needed the apostle, on this supposition, so earnestly counsel elsewhere, "Examine yourselves whether Christ be in you,"—if he had only meant, "among you."

Finally, here, if the word mystery bears any reference to the heathen mysteries, as some have supposed—or to those things which by distinction were communicated to the initiated in their heathen rites; then, at least, the apostle tells us, there is no distinction in Christ's school as to right of access, between novices and perfect ones (*teleioi*): all may be of the initiated here. In what pleasing harmony with the saying of the Master: "To the poor the gospel is preached,"—this of the servant, "whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus!"—

And, now, more particularly of this summary of the gospel: how worthy of our meditation! In some places, indeed, Paul's summary may be rather said to be expressed by the formula "Christ on you"—or "Christ unto and

upon all who believe,"—for righteousness. Just as we find in the New Testament various descriptions of the great object of faith:—now, "he who believeth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God," or, again, "who-soever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John iv.)—or yet again, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved:" Just, I say, as we see this variety in the expression of the great objective truth: So in representing to us summarily God's own part in conveying redemption to the soul, sometimes the justifying act may be put in the foreground: as thus, —Christ is "made of God righteousness:" or as in the Old Testament, "Behold I bring near my righteousness." Sometimes as in the text, Christ in us, revealed in us, formed in us, the hope of glory, is the selected point. But, though it is the subjective rather than the objective that challenges our attention here; that other part of the mystery of the gospel—God manifested in the flesh—is not forgotten: it is recognised in the *near* context. In the very beginning of the next chapter of this same epistle to the Colossians, under the words, "the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, the Father, and of Christ," the apostle implies evidently the whole glorious plan of redemption: nay, in this same chapter, how largely, before we come to our text, do we find the apostle dilating on salvation in its more objective view: or comprehending the objective with the subjective, when (in ver. 12, 13, 14) he gives thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance

of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins!

But the careful reader of our Lord's or His apostles' discourses will have seen, that this spiritual union between Christ and ransomed souls is made very prominent in their teaching. The manner, too, in which the Master as well as the servant puts the subject before us, is calculated to impress us with the idea that a glorious privilege indeed is meant; something, in the mode of it, transcending carnal reason, and to be understood and appreciated fully only in the light of experience. Hence, of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, He says, "whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." And in his prayer to the Father, when crowning all with that far-reaching expression of his heart's desire, "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them," He adds, "and I in them,"—as if this were the beginning and end of all. We learn his own estimate of the meaning of this union when He, a little before, compared it, passing by all inferior illustrations, to the union of the Divine persons with one another: "As thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us,"—or, more impressively still, (John xiv. 20), "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Here, we see, He passes by all the inferior illustrations; yet need I remind you of the variety of these, and their most interesting significance?—the comparison of the vine and

branches; the natural body, in the unity of head and members; the oneness, in the conjugal bond, of those who are declared to be no longer twain, but one flesh.

No mere moral union is this; nor merely relative, or forensic; but real, personal, spiritual. How shall words describe it? How shall our largest stretch of mental apprehension reach the full import of "Christ in believers, and they in Christ, as Christ is in the Father, and the Father in him"? This, truly, is the exalting of man's position far above his original position in the state of innocence itself. If we have lost the integrity of the first Adam, we have obtained the perfection of the second. For, as we have just said, it is no mere moral union, or union in feeling, and sympathy, as when one friend may be said to dwell in the heart of another. Such sympathy might be affirmed of angels—but *they* are not said to constitute the body of Christ, nor to be so joined unto the Lord as to be one spirit with Him.

Neither is it a mere relative union, as all members of the visible Church hold of Christ, or are "in him," by profession; for there are branches in him, thus far, that may be "taken away." These are not said to have Christ in them.

Nothing less can suffice to be put on this expression as its real meaning, than that it is a spiritual union effected through the invisible bond of the Holy Ghost, by faith; in virtue of which Christ becomes so closely associated with the souls that by faith apprehend him, that He may be said not only to be in them, but to live in them; so by his living operative presence, affecting the secret springs of

action of the whole moral man,—the understanding, the will, the affections, that, as Paul puts it, it is not so much they that live as Christ in them. The one Spirit of Christ, who is in the Head without measure, is also given in measure to every part or member of his mystical body, diffusing Himself, in some analogy with the blood or life of the natural body, through the whole spiritual frame-work: The relation to the Second man—the heavenly—effecting that they are all of one spirit, even as the relation to the first Adam, their natural head or root, effects that they are of one blood.

This is a mystery indeed, beyond reason to comprehend, just as the oneness of the Divine persons to which it is compared; beyond, but not contrary to, mere reason. Time fails, as well as words fail, to speak of the riches—the glory, of this mystery—Christ in you,—or of the blessed state to which a believer is thus elevated. Let us but glance at the safety—the dignity—of that state, and, as suggested by the text, at the ulterior good, the heavenly inheritance, of which Christ's presence in the soul is the earnest.

The present state: judge of it first by those subordinate illustrations just adverted to—the branch and vine—the head and body—the conjugal union.

What communion of relations; what identity of interests; what sameness of nature and life; are here implied!

"This is a great mystery," says Paul elsewhere, when he has just spoken of the human twain in the conjugal bond becoming one flesh; but, carrying us in the application of the term to the higher union shadowed by the lower, "I speak," he adds, "concerning Christ and the church."

Then, vine and branch: one life belongs to these—one nature: What is wanting in one figure is supplied in the other: it takes them all to illustrate the reality. If one life is implied in the comparison of vine and branch, yet we cannot speak of one interest there; the marriage union suggests this additional idea. Husband and wife have all interests, all relations, in common. So, Christ's interests and yours, Christian—yea, Christ's relations and yours, are one. He gives you what is His: all things are yours: and, shall I say, He assumes what is yours; your sins (or debts) to expiate them; your sorrows to bear them. How this serves to explain the words in our context: "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ!"

But, passing by all these, even as Christ in his prayer passes them by; think again of being in Christ as he is in the Father, and of Christ being in us as the Father is in Him!

Are believers indeed of like nature with the Son of God as He is of like nature with the Father? It is even so in measure. In resemblance, though not in equality, they are partakers of a divine nature; not by communication of Godhead, nor by confusion of humanity with divinity. As the Son himself is distinct personally from the Father, yet one; so are they not personally—though mystically—one with Christ; human still, yet with Christ one spirit, members of His body, flesh, and bones. "Christ liveth in me," saith the apostle. How close the union! how blessed their communion with the Father also through the Son!

Here too, the communion as of relations, so of interests! Can it be presumption in the believing soul to

ground on its relation to God's Son, the claim of a filial interest in Him of whom that Son is constituted heir! a claim by grace of adoption to that which is the Son's by merit? Yea, does not Christ warrant the inference?—supplicating for all his people an interest as joint heirs in the same love wherewith the Father has loved Him; and asking this, as we have seen, on the very ground of the union and mutual indwelling—"That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and *I in them*"? Yea, see how, in another place, He follows out the inference to all its blessed consequences. In answer to the question of Jude (John xiv.), "How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us and not unto the world?", He says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Are these things so? Let us without delay press the practical lessons they involve. What adoring gratitude is due to God for grace so marvellous—"riches indeed"—"riches of glory!" What is man, we may well exclaim, that thus thou are mindful of him? "A little lower than angels"—yea, in some respects, above angels—is the position to which redemption elevates him. The life forfeited is more than regained: As we have said; for the integrity of the first Adam, we have got the perfection of the second—his righteousness ours, reckoned to us—his Spirit put within us. What security of spiritual state in such a communion of life with Christ—not Christ crucified only, but Christ exalted, living, reigning!—not union as with the first Adam fulfilling with doubtful issue his probation; but

with a new infallible head, whose probation is consummated! "Your life," says the apostle, "is hid"—he means it of security, as well as secrecy—"with Christ in God."

Next lesson—what an incentive to holiness of heart and life! to tender watchfulness! Who can fail to see how inconsistent with so close a relation to the heavenly—such a presence of the divinity—is all that is earthly, sensual, devilish—nay, all that is light and frivolous? "Ye are," says Paul, "the temple of God:" defile not his temple—ye are "members of Christ:" keep yourselves pure.

And then—from one member of the body of Christ to another, what love, yea, what reverence is due! "Destroy not thy brother," says Paul, "for whom Christ died." May we not say analogously, offend not, nor heedlessly wound, thy brother in whom Christ lives? But more than this negative duty of mutual inoffensiveness is implied in so close a union and communion. There arises the obligation to contribute, each in our part, to the edification of the whole. How finely is this represented in these words (Eph. iv.): "From whom—that is, Christ the head—the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love!" The idea is that not more surely do obstructions in the natural body hinder the circulation of the blood and spirits, induce a languishing of the natural strength, and impair its comeliness, than the want of due affection and communion among Christians shrivels the spiritual frame, and hinders

the circulation of the vital influence on which the increase and perfecting of the body of Christ depend.

We have dwelt so long on the subject of the gospel preacher's message, that we can only exhibit in outline what the closing views of the chapter suggest as to the spirit befitting him who is entrusted with such a message.

First, mark the apostle's earnestness, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom"—Christ is his theme—His person, work, grace. How close, how particular his dealing with individual souls!

Second, how lofty his aim! Not contented with converting men, he seeks their perfecting. How he labours, agonises (so the word signifies) in the pursuit of this object! Perfection in Christ Jesus means, no doubt, perfection in holiness, through communion with him, implying the perfection in righteousness also, which union to him secures.

See again, in what spirit of humble dependence on a strength not his own he labours after this great object, yet in a spirit of hopeful confidence which is fraught with suggestiveness—"Striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily." He speaks like a man who knows his ground, who believes in his call to the work, and has an adequate appreciation of the power of the instrument given to him to wield: that word which is mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. He speaks as conscious of a divine power working in him; the experience of which power, in the soul of any preacher, is no mean pledge of the success he labours after: Yet, "in all wisdom," says Paul—No fanaticism here: his zeal is

associated with prudent consideration of method, season, circumstances; while, without partiality, and yet without fear, he warns every man, and instructs every man!

Can I close, fathers and brethren,—can I close this address better than in commending to you this example of apostolic zeal, and prudence withal?—Not here only, but from the words of the same apostle elsewhere,—learn how he exemplified that spirit of holy earnestness, and indefatigableness, becoming the man who watches for souls. He could appeal to the men of Ephesus: “Remember that I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears”—and to the men of Thessalonica: “Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe: As ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children!”

Let the younger labourers in the gospel catch the flame of a holy emulation. Let the aged employ even waning strength in the good work—a work which, when, if it so be, they are unable to forward by “teaching” and “warning” with their living voice, they can further by their prayers in secret places. The poet says—

“They also serve who only stand and wait.”*

* The above discourse was preached at the opening of the General Assembly of the Canada Presbyterian Church, in Quebec, June 1871.

XVIII.

DEATH MADE TRIBUTARY TO THE GLORY OF GOD.*

"This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God."—
JOHN xxi. 19.

It has not been overlooked, as belonging to the very evidences of Christianity, and of the Saviour's Divine commission, that He on so many occasions foretold future events,—foretold them, too, with that particularity of detail or circumstance which bespeaks the confidence of the true prophet. We find Him predicting the destinies of the infant Church, and of his own nation; the part of other nations also relatively to it. In a second class of passages, He foretells his own sufferings, death, and resurrection, in terms of reserve indeed, and with consideration of what his humble attached followers were able to bear, yet with sufficient plainness to make the truth of his prophecies apparent as the events developed themselves:—these events again in their very kind being such as no mere human foresight could anticipate, and implying a

* Preached at Toronto in August 1869, on occasion of the death of the Rev. Robert Burns, D.D., Professor of Church History in Knox' College.

test of truth to which no impostor would have committed himself. Thus, it is not His death only that he foretells, but the kind or manner of it,—“When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man:” He thus addresses his countrymen, though crucifixion is known to have been no Jewish but a Roman punishment; neither is it his resurrection only He foretells, but his resurrection on the third day. And who can fail to remark the calm self-possession with which He anticipates what was before him of humiliation and suffering, and the marked contrast between this unruffled composure so becoming one who knew himself fulfilling an eternal covenant, and the perplexity and trepidation often evinced by his immediate disciples?

Again, there is a third class of passages,—to it the words of our context belong—in which the Saviour foretells the future of particular individuals among the disciples themselves. There is something most touching in His language concerning both Peter and John. We see in His manner with these apostles at once the dignity of the master and the condescending familiarity of the friend. It was not the habit of Jesus to gratify needless curiosity; and He gently chides the ardent Peter, who still appears here in the closing stage of this Gospel narrative,—in character shall I say?—presuming somewhat too much on his friendship with his loved master. And so his question, as to the future of his fellow apostle John, is only answered in obscure terms, accompanied with the suggestion to mind his present duty: “Follow thou me.” Nor is it uninteresting to mark the evidence of the good man’s disposition to acquiesce. Jesus had already said, Follow me; and

observe, it is said that, turning about, Peter saw that other disciple coming after him—a proof, this, that Peter was already on the way. The words, Follow me, have with reason been interpreted, in the light of another passage, as meaning, Follow me in suffering; make up your mind to fellowship with me in the cross: for it is recorded in chapter thirteenth that when Simon Peter asked of Jesus, Whither goest thou? his Divine Master replied, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. The words, “thou shalt stretch forth thy hands” aptly apply to crucifixion; and it is the very uniform tradition of the early Church that Peter died this manner of death at Rome, crucified on the same day on which Paul was beheaded—that is, about the year sixty-eight, or the last year of the Emperor Nero. It is, moreover, a tradition that the holy man was crucified with his head downwards, himself requesting it should be so: An admirable humility; for it was not that he shunned conformity to his Lord, as not glorying in His cross; but that, feeling himself unworthy of the honour of a literal fellowship with Him, he invited a lower shame for his sake.

There are who doubt the fact of Peter ever having been at Rome at all, and so do not receive this tradition: but there is a remarkable concurrence of ancient testimonies in its favour, Greek, Latin, and Syriac. The prediction of our Lord can hardly be understood to denote less than a death by violence; and the original words, “by what death” may, with strict accuracy, be rendered “by what kind of death.” We do not dwell on this question, our object being to deal with the important truths implied

in our text. This much we may add on the historical question, adopting the conclusion of Lardner, that, since it is generally admitted that the words in the context do comport with the tradition; describing in natural language the manner in which the sufferer by crucifixion submitted himself to preparation for that painful death; and seeing that no other city but Rome claims to be the place of Peter's martyrdom; we seem to be justified in accepting the unvarying testimony of antiquity on this point: which we can do without being in the least committed to an acquiescence in the absurd pretensions set up in Peter's name to a universal episcopate for the good apostle himself, still less in the pretensions of his so-called successors in the Roman See.

Coming to the text itself, then, we invite your attention to two leading thoughts suggested by it. One is, the certainty of death as the appointed lot of every man; the other is that death is an appointed means of glorifying God. The certainty, you may observe, is assumed rather than expressed, but only the more solemnly impressive. And death is not referred to in the abstract, but in its end or design. It is not said, "signifying what death he should die," but "by what, or what kind of, death he should glorify God." Let us meditate on these truths, looking for the Divine blessing.

The certainty of death for all is here assumed: alas! a fact familiar to us, and as to which our only danger is our allowing our familiarity with it to abate our sense of its importance.

It should affect us that a thing so strange in its nature

should now be reckoned our natural lot; that none can escape it; that all must make up their mind to it, the good, the bad; the sainted apostle! Is it, then, right to call death as some call it, the debt of nature? No! reason revolts at the thought. Who that reflects at all on what is observed on every side, of vanity, vexation, grief, but feels and is ready to say, Surely this world is not as it came from the creator's forming hand? Surely a good God cannot take delight in the misery of his creatures. Whence this universal sighing? Whence are all the ties that bind us to one another in this state of existence liable to be so rudely broken? How is it that man sickens and fades away, more evanescent than the very herb or flower of the field? more,—for, as an ancient Scripture puts it, the herb or tree that fades away revives, and, through the scent of water, is reproduced when Spring returns; but man dieth, and where is he? at least, as to all that is visible on earth, he has disappeared. And under what humbling conditions is the strongest frame dissolved, the fairest human flower rendered unsightly! How under the ravages of sickness, and the process of dissolution, does what was loved, and is loved still, become revolting; and affection itself says, Bury my dead out of my sight! This is *not* natural, it is something violatory of nature; and in vain are all speculations on the cause till we come, and the philosopher must come, and take the explanation which the Bible gives us Sin has entered—hence the change. Sin has entered, and death by sin. How expressive is the language of the apostle Paul—(Rom. v.)! He personifies death as a monarch or tyrant of resistless power. “By one man's offence

Death has reigned by one;" and never, we may say, was monarch or tyrant so inexorable! O king of terrors, how innumerable are thy subjects, and how unrelenting the rigour of thy sway over them! Wherever the sons of Adam have been, they have obeyed thee: they who have placed the yoke on the neck of others have themselves bent to thine. By whatever lines of partition the territories of monarchs have been divided, of a truth thou disregardest them all, walkest over them all, challenging the earth as *thy* domain; and from thy dominion no age, no sex, no condition is free. Thou draggest the infant from the mother's breast, the mother from her helpless children. Thou comest unbidden to the banquet, and summonest princes from their revelry; thou sendest thy pale messengers and surprisest the senator amidst his devices, the philosopher, the theologian; the humble artificer, also, while plying his industrious craft. Thou waitest not for unfinished schemes, or new-bought acquisitions. Thou delightest, as it seems, to reverse human purposes,—to turn the day of joy into mourning: thou destroyest the hope of man! Has not the bridal chamber been darkened with the funereal pall? Has not the goodly mansion, as soon as built and garnished, yielded its intending occupant to the claim of the narrow house? What thousands have paid this ghastly king tribute on the battle field, and on the deep sea! What swarms of busy cities have been gathered into his dark repositories; and still the grave saith not, It is enough!

Yes: there is no other explanation. Sin has entered and death has reigned. The sceptic may wrangle, the

mockers may blaspheme: but the doctrine of the fall is written on all the pillars of the globe, and attested by everything within us and around us. Hence the withering blight which has gone forth on the constitution of man! hence creation groans! hence every feeling of uneasiness; every sigh of weakness; every token of mortality!

Now, in the light of the ascertained cause, revelation also instructs us as to the end, or purpose, of death. It is true, God delights not in the misery of his creatures. When the freethinker says, A good God cannot so delight, we grant it to him. The thing which so appals us redounds in some way to God's glory. The language of our text suggests the question, how by death God is glorified? and we shall answer this by looking at death under three various aspects: (1) Death, as it is the universal law, the doom of a sinful race: (2) Death, as it has been submitted to by Christ, the surety: (3) As it still, though powerless, for ever remains the lot of the saint. We love to preach Christ; and the second of these considerations is necessary to our full illustration of the third.

I. Death as the penalty of sin glorifies—need I say?—the retributive justice and holiness of the Creator and Divine Lawgiver. The word had gone forth, Dying thou shalt die; and the offence once committed, the commandment violated, the curse must needs come, even judgment on all men to condemnation. But though the immediate effect, this is not, blessed be God, the only, or the chief end. The inspired writer to the Romans (chap. v.) suggests another end, both of the offence and of the judgment. The

law entered that the offence might abound ; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. The reasoning of the apostle implies, that divine wisdom has taken occasion, by man's sin and ruin, to manifest the riches of divine mercy ; or, sin has been overruled, and death as following in its train, as a foil to set off in surpassing lustre the great redemption, and the benefits accruing to the objects of redeeming love from the doing and dying of the Son of God.

II. Let us view God as glorified in the death of his Son. We have affirmed that death is not the debt of nature, however it is now the law, the necessity of fallen nature. We equally affirm that to true Christians it is no longer the debt of sin, as its expiation I mean ; albeit the body even of the saint dies, in some sense, because of sin. If we but consider the reference of the Saviour's death to the law of God, and, I may add, to the love of God, we shall see the evidence of both these affirmations.

It is Christ who has paid the debt of sin. How, but as magnifying the righteous law, and as vindicating the divine holiness, can we account for the death of the Just One ; and more than the death of the body, that agony of his human spirit endured by him in the garden and on the cross ? Let the freethinker look here. Look here, you who say, when either the disorders of earth, or the threatened torments of hell, are the question : It cannot be that a good and great God can take pleasure in the sorrows of poor imperfect creatures. We grant it. But explain, then, this mystery—a far greater one than the suffering of

mere creatures, and sinful creatures. Here is the sinless one stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted! Yes; "of God!" it is not that Christ suffered at the hands of men. That is not the mystery: A philosopher, in his musings, might have foretold that if virtue descended on earth, or a perfectly virtuous man mingled with the ordinary society of human beings, persecution at their hands would be sure to be his lot. But this is the mystery: He suffered at the hand of God, a just God himself! HE not only permitted the suffering of the innocent one: It pleased the LORD to bruise him and to put him to grief: Himself put the cup into the hand of the innocent sufferer. Was it that He took pleasure in the suffering of his beloved Son? Nay, it was not that He loved Him less: shall we say, then, that He loved *us* more? Rather say, He loved our redemption more—loved—and the Son himself loved, the glory of the lawgiver more, the cause of righteousness more. Let the great sufferer himself explain the mystery. Hear him exclaiming, "Now is my soul troubled: Father, save me from this hour!" Hear him add—oh wondrous words!—"but for this cause came I unto this hour; Father, glorify thy name." This is the explanation. Die the sinner, or die the surety; or, "justice must." "He made Him to be sin for us, Him who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

Hence, while we have said that death is not the debt of nature, we show our reason for also saying death is not, in the case of the saints, the debt of sin. It is not left to them to pay this death, whatever relation their death has to sin as its original procuring cause. They are not called

to glorify God, in satisfying His justice, or redressing the wrong to His law. Justice is satisfied—the law honoured—yea, magnified already. Yes; God has been glorified in the highest: for never was sin so seen in its demerit and turpitude as in the cross; never the law so seen in its dread majesty; but, alike, never as in the cross did divine love appear in its magnitude and intensity:—passing knowledge “in its length and breadth, its depth and height.”

And so sin and death are turned into ministers of good to ransomed men, as well as of glory to the Divine Law-giver, and the praise of abounding mercy. For, grace reigns unto eternal life, through righteousness: “Reigns”—whatever of resistless power we have found associated with the personification of death as a tyrant and enemy, is, to say the least, associated with this personification of grace. But the apostle says “much more.” If from the king of terrors there is no escape; to the designs of grace there shall be no hindrance. Death reigns a usurper. Grace is now enthroned on righteousness, and in efficacy as well as certainty shall it not equal, yea, surpass? The life lost is more than retrieved. Death has come by the one man—justification is for many offences: Who can estimate the righteousness of the second, in its value? who can estimate the eternal life which is, on the ground of it, and in proportion to it—the gift of God?

III. God is glorified in the death of the saint. It may be asked if, neither as being the debt of nature, the saint glorifies God by death, nor as being the debt of sin, in what sense is it left him to glorify God in dying? Passively, we

answer; actively also:—passively, as death, in common with all the tribulations which beloug to his state of pilgrimage, deepens his sense of dependence, and affords occasion for divine strength being perfected in his weakness:—actively, as it affords scope for the exercise of every grace of the Christian character, and especially the patience and faith of the saints.

The question has indeed sometimes exercised the thoughts of devout as well as speculative minds, why a Christian should be subjected to the law of death at all, now that the ransom has been paid, and the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. Indeed, of a truth, we might answer, death is to the Christian destroyed! he has passed from under death, in all that is penal and most formidable in it; so that the Saviour says of him that believeth in Him, that he shall never die. Death unstinged is as no death. However, in a sense, the body indeed is "dead because of sin, while the spirit is life because of righteousness." But, then, what remains of death and of the humiliation of the grave is but a step to the believer's exaltation; a part of that process of change by which the sanctification of the heir of glory is perfected—a change affecting the soul in the first instance, but the body also, in purifying and refining it into a meet associate for a perfected spirit—a change by which it regains its pristine vigour and beauty, or more than its pristine, in a conformity to Christ's glorious body. It may belong to the necessary education of the soul itself, that through the felt oppressions of the clay tabernacle in which it groans being burdened, it shall receive indelible impressions of the

power of that moral contagion of sin so long adhering to the flesh : while, like the remembrance of life's sorrows this may enhance the enjoyment of heaven's purity as well as rest ;—evoke more ardent admiration and louder praise of the patience that forbore, the power that upheld, the grace that, after they have suffered a while, and by that suffering, made the children of God perfect, strengthened, settled them. Yes ; God works in a mysterious way,—brings great results from seeming opposites. The corn of wheat must die in the ground, to vegetate and bear fruit. He who asks, why should a Christian die at all ? might ask as well,—why suffer at all ? or,—why is his sanctification not perfected at once as is his justification—why permitted to sin at all ? or, as well ask, why the captain of salvation was himself perfected through suffering ? Could He not have converted the world, as by miracle, by coming down from the cross, when the enemy blasphemously taunted him : “ He saved others ; himself he cannot save ” ? He came not down : fixed to the accursed tree he remained, but not from any incapacity to save himself apart from his own love and covenant. He did a greater thing, when in dying, he overcame death ; and if he shunned not the grave, even as he abhorred not the virgin's womb, He glorified his power more by overcoming the king of terrors in the very citadel of his kingdom ; spoiling the grave of its victory, as He fulfilled that word, “ Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up ; ” giving earnest, thus, of his final triumph over the last enemy, when the grave, obedient to his mandate, shall yield up all its captives, and death shall be swallowed up in victory.

Flesh and blood, says Paul, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Not that matter is inherently evil—an error into which some early sects fell,—but that once tainted by sin, and, in the case of many who have obtained mercy, bearing the traces of its former servitude to the wicked one, it may be needful that, like the house vitiated by the fretting leprosy, it be taken down, disorganised, dissolved; ere it shall be fitted to bear the image of the heavenly.

Finally; not passively only is God glorified by the death of the saints: the text suggests by its language that actively the dying disciple is to glorify God: The words describe his duty as well as his destiny. And it is of vital importance to see the relation of a Christian's work, whether in living or dying, to his well-being and peace. Our Saviour furnishes a solution of this matter. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit" (John xv.) Let it be observed, all obedience is *fruit*; life is presupposed—union to himself—the spiritual engrafting. It is not honouring God to account the Christian's death—even martyrdom—a meritorious expiation. So some have spoken of the baptism of blood effecting in the case of martyrs what the baptism of water and of the Spirit may have effected for others. Away with such a thought!* The

* For evidence that some in the earlier centuries ascribed to martyrdom such an efficacy ("lavacrum sanguinis") see *Hermas' Pastor*, or *Tertullian*: 'Vitam vobis (says *Hermas*, addressing the martyrs) donat Dominus, delicta enim vestra vos gravabant: et nisi passi essetis hujus nominis causa, propter peccata certe vestra mortui eratis Deo.' So *Tertull.* de resur., "Nemo enim peregrinatus a corpore statim immoratur penes Dominum, nisi ex martyrii prerogativa scilicet paradiso, non inferis, diversurus."

The death of a martyr was supposed to efface sin, and to introduce the person immediately to paradise. Some think the error was founded on a

exercise of the Christian's grace in the act of dying, like each instance of his new obedience, belongs to the head of thank-offering, the obedience of love: it can be no sin-offering. It belongs to the "much fruit" of which our Lord speaks, or of which his apostle speaks who says of all the fruits of righteousness, they are "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Still; there is a grand lesson implied in our text; it is that even dying is to the Christian not a lot inevitable only but a work prescribed, a work of faith, in which it concerns him that he acquit himself meetly.

Too often the limit of men's desire as to death, next, at least, to the being prepared for what is beyond it, is to be resigned to the event. A higher part is here indicated as belonging to the Christian's calling. The final scene, as well as every previous stage of the earthly journey, is a theatre on which his various graces are to be proved and exhibited—not patience only, and meek submission, but love to God and man, and faith's tranquil, if not exulting, confidence in the expectation of eternal life. The very valley of death is still a field on which the soldier of the cross may win honours, not for himself, but for his Lord, according as every word of his, and every act may be, or may fail to be, edifying to others, and commendatory of the gospel of Christ. It seems as if this were Paul's meaning in those expressions so brief but pregnant: "whether we live we live unto the Lord, whether we die we die unto the Lord." "To the Lord!" it is not safety

misinterpretation of such scriptures as Matt. v. 10-12; Mark x. 39; Rev. vi. 9, &c.—and they observe an analogy in the idea with that of the ancient Greeks in assigning to heroes the first claim to the Elysium, or the isles of the blessed.

alone he thinks of; nor his well being, though to die is gain: The true soldier of Jesus owns his Lord's propriety in his latest acts or aspirations—for so the apostle interprets his words again, as he thus describes his utmost wish; "that Christ may be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death" (Phil. i.)

And what variety is to be seen in the modes of death, and seasons of death, affording corresponding varieties in the opportunity and means of God being glorified both actively and passively! To Peter and John, as we have it in the record, different parts were assigned: to Peter, "to stretch forth his hands;" and he failed not, when his hour as a confessor came. John, no less a martyr in spirit, according to history scarcely less in act,—saved from a cruel death as by miracle,—was reserved to honour in exile the same testimony of Jesus. Who can doubt that the one end of glorifying God was in view of the supreme disposer as to both, though more specially expressed as to the one? Ever present to his own mind, Jesus recognises this end through every scene of his earthly course. When He spake of his own sufferings, this, as we have seen, was the thought that stilled to acquiescence his troubled spirit. This was his explanation of the sickness of Lazarus whom He loved: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (John xi.) "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" So to the mourning sister; just as He said to the inquirer concerning the man born blind; "It is that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

What else should be our explanation of the variety in the life and death, the allotted spheres, and meted trials, of Christians? Some die early; early they are withdrawn from the field of conflict; spared the encounter with the world's rude blasts, which, with others, precedes the heavenly rest. It has sometimes been said—has passed indeed into a sort of proverb in the mouth of certain observers—Such a child or youth is too good to live long. Like many sentimental aphorisms, this needs qualification. It is rather against it that the loved disciple John lived the longest of the apostles, seeing the very close of the first century. It may be allowed that God does, now and again, work a great work in a little time, thus glorifying His power and grace. He saves even at the eleventh hour, so glorifying His sovereignty: who may question His right to do what he wills with his own? But it is far from being always true that those withdrawn early, or removed from the militant church in mid-time of their days, are riper for heaven, in the ordinary sense of the expression, than many who have been left behind, and have been full of years ere they have been gathered into the garner. Perfected, of course, each must have been at death; but in all the symptoms of comparative ripeness that fell under others' eyes, they may have been inferior to many of their survivors, whether in the fervour of devotion, or in the abundance of their good works. It is hard to say which is more honoured; he who is earlier released from labours, and received to his reward, or he who is trusted longer,—shall we say needed more? at the post of difficulty and danger,—longer spared to represent the Master's cause on

earth—reserved, it may be, for a brighter crown in connection with harder toils. Is it not said, They who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever? The sentiment of our context forbids any nice adjustment of this question: "What is that to thee? follow thou me." Grudge not his free and full salvation to the labourer of the one hour; the labourer of many hours owes all to the same grace. Let the beauteous moral picture have our meed of admiration, when from the lips of the comparative suckling God perfects praise. But we account it not less beauteous when we behold the aged pilgrim holding on his way with unfaltering confidence in the God for whose salvation he has long waited; enduring without a murmur the tribulations of the long and weary road; more humble, more gentle, more weaned from the world, more loving to his associates in the heavenward journey. Grudge not, if the Shepherd, descending into His garden, sees it meet to remove the tender lily to a more congenial clime. But we shall not doubt the wisdom or love that spares another, like the cedar of Lebanon, to bear the buffeting of life's storms to the praise of God's grace; or, like the palm tree, still to yield his fruit when others fade. It is to show that the Lord is upright; a rock of confidence to the end:—

Often has the glory of the natural horizon, under the lingering rays of a departing sun, suggested itself to observers, as a like moral radiance has gilded the hour of the saint's descent to the grave; and all the faith and love of a long life have seemed gathered into the chastened, but assured, accents of the pilgrim's latest utterance; and,

even when the voice has uttered its last, have lingered in the eye, as it looked forth loving still; yet upward, longing for the nearing glory; and the dying one has seemed to say to loved ones around, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know!"*

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GENERAL APPLICATION.—Let God be glorified! We have spoken of man, that is, of the grace of God which was with him; and we would conclude as we began by speaking of Jesus. We would revert in one word to the direct lessons of the text; desiring to leave on the mind the impression at once of what is consoling and what is admonitory in this passage of holy writ. It instructs that every circumstance that can affect your future is in the hand of a heavenly friend who foresees all and controls all: and, if it teaches us that even in dying we may not be selfishly concerned for safety alone, surely it implies that forthwith,

* The author knows that it will not be grudged to him, by the reader, if he indulges filial affection by embalming in this note the memory of honoured parents, both dying in a good old age, and both of whom, with others however also, have been present to his mind, when describing the death bed of the saint. Never can he forget the reverential yet confiding and serene word and air of the one, so worthy of a mother in Israel, a pattern of every domestic virtue: nor ever forget the meek and weaned air (in the case of the other) of a naturally high spirit, the superiority to every earthly passion, the silence under sense of remembered wrongs, and assured filial reliance on his heavenly father—the fitting close of a life of singular piety, and a ministry honoured by no few tokens of the Master's acceptance.

This reminiscence is the less irrelevant, as it was at least one element in the writer's regard for his senior colleague in Knox College (a feeling partly fraternal, partly filial), that not seldom he was reminded, besides his silver locks, by his whole presence and bearing, his lively manners, yet with dignity and courtesy, of his own revered father.

† The sermon, as printed apart, contains a lengthened obituary notice. See Appendix to this volume.

and in all things, we should aim at the one great end of promoting God's glory. And, especially, calling to your mind one leading idea, that all our acceptable obedience to God's will presupposes faith in the Saviour's finished work, we invite you, by the consideration that He has glorified God in sinners' behalf, to take boldness, humbly and penitently, but with steady affiance, to cast yourselves on Him. How pleasing to know that our salvation on this wondrous plan derogates from no perfection of God! that truth is at one with mercy, as revealed in his Son; and that even as the Son hath glorified the Father, and the Spirit glorifieth the Son, so do we honour all the Godhead, when, renouncing false refuges, we avail ourselves of a provision in which all harmonise; and, recognising our obligations to a grace so free and abounding, yield ourselves living sacrifices to God, in a willing performance of every duty, and patient endurance of appointed tribulations!

XIX.

THE MARRIAGE-SUPPER OF THE LAMB.

"Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb."

—REV. xix. 9.

THE Gospel contains in it what is every way adapted to human want, and what is in the highest degree ennobling to human nature. There is much in it that is matter of gratitude; but there is over and above this what may well be matter of adoring wonder. Who can reflect on the subject which the text now read suggests, without exclaiming, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" That we should hear of pardon for guilty sinners, or of restoration to the Divine favour in any measure, is good news indeed; but the Gospel tells us more than this: tells of the condescension of our Redeemer, a Divine Person, in stooping so low, as to betroth to Himself—so to say—his redeemed Church, and to elevate sinners of Adam's race to all the dignity and bliss which such a spiritual conjugal relationship implies. It tells us, too, that this is done not grudgingly; and therefore, as we read of the marriage, we read also of the marriage-supper of the Lamb; of the invitation to the feast where they who come are permitted to rejoice with Christ, and Christ rejoiceth with them, in the celebration of this wondrous union.

It will be fitting, in discoursing on the subject, to speak, first, of this spiritual marriage itself, and of this supper of the Lamb—What is it? and when and where is it celebrated? then, secondly, to inquire, Who are the “called” to this spiritual communion? and thirdly, What is the blessedness here affirmed of those so called?

I. I need not go about to prove that by the “Lamb” Christ our Saviour is intended. It is a designation frequently applied to Him in Scripture, and doubtless points especially to the great design with which He was manifested—to take away sin. However suitable to express the personal characteristics of the meek and lowly Jesus, it is mainly suggestive of his atoning work, as He is the great antitype of those sacrifices with which the church was for so many ages familiar. “Ye are redeemed,” says an apostle, “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” And, a most interesting illustration it is of the importance of Christ’s sacrificial work, that, in the songs of the Church triumphant, as well as in the services of the Church on earth, He—the Saviour—is contemplated in this as his chiefest and most endearing relation to us: It is as the Lamb slain that He is followed by the armies of heaven:—It is as the Lamb He is enthroned with the Father; and the remembrance is ever fresh, as in a song new and unwearying, of Him “who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood.”

And “the marriage of the Lamb!” who does not remember how often Christ is represented as the bridegroom of

the Church, who eternally loved, and chose, and in time espouses to himself, His redeemed ones? Alike in the language of the Old Testament and the New, the intimate relationship between the Saviour and the saved is illustrated by the marriage union and covenant: on the one hand, the love of Christ, the head, and His care of his Church in nourishing and cherishing it, is likened to the husband's care of the spouse; and, on the other, the spouse's subjection to the husband is taken to image forth the obedience of the Church to its heavenly Head.

In the covenant of redemption, we may say, this great design was set on foot. There did the Divine surety strike hands for the objects of his condescending love, there identify himself with the people given him.

And behold in His incarnation, in his obedience and death, so many steps in the unfolding of the gracious design: "He loved the church, and gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and present it to himself a glorious church" (Eph. v.)

But as regards the individual, the spiritual marriage to the Lord Christ is consummated in effectual calling: unless indeed we shall say rather that the soul is but betrothed to Christ then; for the consummation,—the being brought home to dwell with the Saviour in his Father's house, and the sharing to the full the glory of fellowship with him,—is reserved for the heavenly state. Hence his prayer, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am" (John xvii.)

But even here is the marriage solemnised, the relation-

ship formed. Here, on earth, the believing soul, apprehending the excellence and suitableness of Emmanuel, leaves all to follow him, esteeming him the chief among ten thousand. Thus we may understand the marriage of the Lamb not only of Christ's espousals of the collective church, but of the union to Him of each elect soul in the bonds of the Spirit and of faith.

Then, the marriage-supper—when and where is it? we naturally inquire; and divers answers may be given to the question. If the various generations of the redeemed constitute Christ's spouse collectively, any remarkable season of the conversion of souls may be eminently called the day of Christ's espousals,—the day of the gladness of his heart. Accordingly, we need not wonder if the time of the concluding of the dispensation of grace, and the assembling of all the objects of God's special love around the table of heaven, be emphatically called the day of "the marriage of the Lamb." And so some apply the words of our text and context to the joy of the millennial period, when, after the downfall of Babylon, and the conversion of ancient Israel, the church shall be much enlarged, and Zion shall put on her beautiful garments: Others apply it to the heavenly blessedness, the great consummation, when the Saviour shall finally present the church to Himself, and to the Father, perfected and glorious.

But it is manifest, that though these will be eminent instances of the realisation of the blessedness spoken of in our text, the same blessedness is substantially participated in by every soul that is savingly united to Christ. Our Lord, in His discourses when on earth, applied similar

representations to the Gospel of the kingdom in any age, and to those who receive that Gospel. The Church now is as dear to Christ as the Church in future ages will be. Is there not joy in heaven now over one sinner repenting?

Finally, observe how the garments of beauty which are here represented as given to the bride of the Lamb are denominated the righteousness of 'saints'—saints indefinitely, without respect to time, as if to intimate that this apparel is something provided not for the Church of any one period exclusively, but with which all souls espoused to the Redeemer are arrayed. Indeed, such is the intimate communion which the Church in any one generation has with the Church in every other, yea, the Church on earth with the Church in heaven, that the apostle hesitates not to address believers of his own day in these terms: "Ye are come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,"—all through Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, as the foundation and bond of this holy fellowship.

II. "The called to the supper of the Lamb."—Who are they? "Called"—bidden—either to the final banquet above, or to the feast on earth: For they are the same persons. None may expect to be received to the perfect enjoyments of heaven who have not begun their heaven on earth. It is of the effectually called, unquestionably, we are to understand these words; for although it is a

great privilege to possess the gospel—"Blessed are your ears," said Jesus, "for they hear:" yet to many the gospel is but the "savour of death unto death." Those are meant who welcome the gospel invitation—the called according to God's purpose; who are of God, and hear His word, and acquiesce in it with cordial faith.

III. Of such the blessedness may be contemplated under two views: first, what is immediately involved in the calling itself, or in the union, as soon as formed, of the believing soul with its Saviour: secondly, what is enjoyed in communion with Him, whether in ordinances on earth, or in immediate fellowship with the Lamb in heaven.

First, In the calling itself is involved the blessedness of that spiritual union in virtue of which, if the Saviour can say on the one part, "I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine:" on the other, the ransomed one can reciprocate, "My beloved is mine, and I am His." This honour have all the saints. It is not here as in earthly nuptials and festal celebrations. Many may be "called" as friends of the bridegroom and the bride, who are only indirectly interested in the event which congregates them. Here, to be invited—the invitation being complied with—to the marriage-supper, and to be married to the Lord, are one and the same thing; and if, as has just been affirmed, the believing soul is so one with Christ as that it can say, "Christ is mine, and I am His," need we allege more to prove that the called are

blessed? To be one with Christ—to the effect that all our obligations to the law of God are willingly undertaken by Him,—that He shares with us all His communicable glory, and interest in the Father's love, and so that each one joined to the Lord is “one spirit with Him,”—this of a truth is bliss enough! And these are the very words of inspiration used by the Spirit to describe our high calling: “These are the true sayings of God.”

Mark what is given to the bride of the Lamb: “To her was granted to be arrayed in fine linen clean and white: the fine linen is the righteousness of saints”—or “righteousnesses,” as on the margin of our Bibles. How consistent with what is often in plain terms affirmed elsewhere of the immediate effect of union to the Saviour by a living faith—investiture with a title, in right of the glorious Head, to justification of life,—and the reception of a new spiritual nature in a conformity to the image of God's Son: withal a communion of interests! “If ye are Christ's,” says the apostle, “all things are yours.” The love that has espoused grudges no dowry to the daughter of the King. Glorious in the righteousness that is put upon her, she is also, by the imparted grace of the Holy Ghost, “glorious within.” These rich provisions of Divine love are engagingly set forth in the Old Testament as well as in the New—(Ezek. xvi. 8) “When I passed by thee and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love. . . . I entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; I clothed thee with broidered work . . . I decked thee with ornaments: thy beauty was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put

upon thee, saith the Lord God." So (Eph. v. 25) in the New Testament: "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." "Present it to Himself:"—We are carried forward by these wonderful words to the great consummation—the home-bringing of the perfectly sanctified—their introduction to the palace of the King, whence they shall no more go out; ever to be associated with the Lamb in the midst of the throne; ever beholding the Father's face, and serving him day and night in his temple.

The garments of beauty are "given:" they are available to all comers,—*"The called with the holy calling"* owe all their blessedness to free and sovereign grace. And it is thus we may reconcile the general call of the gospel addressed to every class of men,—the poorest, or the guiltiest,—with what we find in another part of Scripture—the disapproval pronounced on such as were found at the marriage-banquet of the King, not having the wedding garment. It is not meant that the sinner must be thus clothed and adorned before he comes to Christ; as if his preparation for the heavenly communion were of his own providing. But, investiture with the robe of righteousness is the first blessing the Saviour bestows, and it is a necessary antecedent to all acceptable or comfortable fellowship with Him here or hereafter. Neither at the table of communion on earth can any be welcome guests, nor can they be admitted to the communion in heaven, who are not attired in *"the fine linen clean and white."* The dis-

pleasure of the King, described in the parable, does not imply, then, that the sinner must previously have possessed himself of qualifications for coming to the Saviour; but that in vain he professes to *have come*; in vain hopes to be counted or recognised as of Christ's friends; while he has not yet accepted the initial grace, or submitted himself to the righteousness of God; never put on the new man of a holy nature.

But, further, the blessedness of the "called" includes whatever this spiritual banquet or supper, prepared by the King of Heaven, is intended to signify. The clothing or adorning is a means to an end: the supper must be different from preparation for it.

The language of the text is applicable, as we have said, either to the communion in grace or the communion in glory. Restricting ourselves at present to the sacred ordinance of the Lord's supper, we feel warranted very specially in regarding *it* as representing in symbol, and, by the divine blessing fitted to impart, that fellowship with Christ which our text commends to us.

Here is a feast in memorial; simple in its appurtenances, but sublime in its import: whether we look to the Divine provider, or the provision; whether we look to the company with which the redeemed are associated in the participation of the benefit; or, whether we look to those exercises of faith, love, and hope, in which this ordinance calls us to engage; we may well say of all who participate truly, they are "blessed."

For, *first*, Who is the entertainer? The Lamb; Christ

crucified, but now exalted : He who was dead, but is alive, and liveth for evermore.

The table of communion, while it is spread in remembrance of the Lamb that was slain, is spread in obedience to His appointment as Zion's living King and Head; and, while it commemorates Him as absent in body, it speaks Him spiritually present. "Wherever I record my name," He declares, "I will come unto you, and I will bless you." "While the King sitteth at His table," says the spouse, "my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof."

High honour indeed to banquet with the King of heaven! It is esteemed a distinguished honour to sit and feast with the great; it is accounted a highest earthly honour to sit with princes; what is it, then, to sit at an entertainment with Him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords? Has He not said,—and must not such words have a meaning?—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him, and he with me." It is not, however, a mere formal attendance at the Lord's table that will ensure this experience: nay, the most devout worshipper may not always realise it in sensible enjoyment. The presence of Christ may sometimes be known rather from the effects of communicated grace, than by happy consciousness in the moments of worship. But, oft again, in the very season of attending on the sacred feast, the precious satisfaction is given, as well as the high honour, of knowing that the Master has come; that the King sitteth at his table, has come into his garden. By the light of his countenance

vouchsafed, He can assure his own of his complacency in them, and of his acceptance of their offering. He can by his Spirit manifest himself to them in another way than He does unto the world. Their hearts can be made to burn within them: their souls enlarged; their graces opening in his presence, as the sun-flower to the sun; the soul in happy moments finding itself high on the mount of fellowship, and feeling "it is good to be here!" Have you, ye saints of God, wondered and adored as you ought at such condescension of the King of glory, if thus you have been privileged, whether oftentimes, or even but once? "Such seasons," says one, "are worthy to be long looked for, and long remembered."

Second,—This leads me to say, they are blessed in the provision which is served up on this table. The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"

Here is a great mystery. The same glorious one who is the entertainer is also the master of this entertainment. It is a feast with Christ; and it is a feast upon Christ. "I am," said He, "that bread of life: he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, he dwelleth in me, and I in him."

This privilege, which the believer may enjoy in every religious ordinance, and does enjoy in a measure in every exercise of faith, is with particular advantage enjoyed at the communion table. He, indeed, feeds on Christ who believably improves him as exhibited in the various promises; but here he is brought very near; these promises sealed by visible emblems appealing to sense as well as faith: Christ

set forth, evidently crucified among us, invites us to see, and taste, and handle him. He who has said, *This is my body*, presents himself *to us*, having already been given *for us*, and proffers again the benefits obtained by his body and blood—that we, spiritually feeding on the heavenly dainties, or renewing our appropriation of them, may be strengthened.

Blessed, then we may well say, are they who are called to this marriage-supper! Can any earthly provision be compared with this? We find indeed the church describing her joys of spiritual fellowship in words taken from earthly banquetings, and luxuries prized by men. “As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”—“Stay me with flagons; comfort me with apples.” The stores of creation are searched by the spouse for language to express her complacency in her Divine head and husband: and the inspired language of the New Testament emulates that of the Old, in laying all nature under contribution for analogies to set forth the life of faith, and the satisfactions of piety. “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the paradise of God.—To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.” Promises these, doubtless, having their chief fulfilment in the communion of glory, but enjoyed in their foretastes in the communion of grace. The boughs of the tree of life are—so to speak—let down to the reach of faith, to take and taste of them now.

The words of Christ assure his humble and earnest followers of these present rewards of grace, (John xiv.): “I

will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Again He says, in answer to the inquiry of Jude: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." It is not that the saints' love to Christ is prior to Christ's love to them. He speaks not of the beginnings of grace here: but the further or renewed manifestations—the encouragements assured to those who have, that, using grace received, "more shall be given" to them.

There is nothing of fanaticism in this idea of a spiritual participation of Christ. A supper—"a feast"—"a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,"—such words, chosen by Inspiration, are designed, surely, to suggest the soul's appropriation of that which is good indeed—the intellectual and spiritual bread. And the Lord's supper is singularly fitted to realise to the true worshipper that fellowship with Christ which is the end of his high calling. Even as a memorial simply, or as intended to keep in remembrance past events of interest, what feast, what supper, is like this? Men count it reasonable to provoke one another to the loving remembrance of domestic or public blessings, by meeting on occasion around the festal board. They signalise eras of birth, of marriage, of victory, by interchanging thoughts and congratulations suited to the recurring day. Memory loves to recall the events which stir the affections of the

family circle, or appeal to national patriotism. But what topics of grateful remembrance can be compared with those which gather round the sacred feast of the Lamb? Here memory, or thought, turns back on the ancient purposes, the wondrous plans, of the Godhead! Here is gratefully recognised the love that passeth knowledge, the mercy that is built up for ever! Here the grace of the Lord Jesus is called to mind—the heights of glory from which He descended; the depths of His voluntary abasement! Here thought ranges over the wide field of the covenant of promise, sealed in the Saviour's blood; and muses on the extent and grandeur of the kingdom and the inheritance! The dying words of Christ, as the best friend, are recalled; His coming again is anticipated and longed for! And the day of the soul's espousals is remembered amidst tears of joy; or tears of sorrow—at the frowardness too long persisted in, of the unconverted state—the patience that waited for the destined bride of the Lamb—the grace that prevailed at length—the love that has sustained and cherished her wavering faith and hope—has disappointed her fears—has answered prayer!

But how much more is this ordinance of Christ a feast indeed, when viewed not as a memorial only, but a seal, the pledge renewed of stipulated grace, the token of plighted love, the earnest in hand of the blessedness in reserve, the foretaste of the heavenly banquet!

And, *finally*, in what honourable company even here—though more hereafter—do the called celebrate this marriage of the Lamb! It is with the blessed Divine Three: it is with the saints of every age: “the glorious company

of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs." Saints on earth are joined in their songs by saints on high; and these by the angels round about the throne:—"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen! *

* A sermon preached on occasion of dispensing the Lord's Supper.

ADDRESSES.

I.

A STANDING MINISTRY;

AND THE RELATION OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY TO THE WORK OF THE PULPIT.*

It is not out of place, and can seldom be out of season, on such occasions as the present, to set forth the authority for a standing ministry, and to proffer suggestions on the matter of preaching, as well as on the question, Who should preach? Indeed, these two questions have a close relation to one another; not the least of the arguments for a standing ministry, or the expediency of a class of men being separated to the service of the Gospel, lying in the nature of the work, in the preciousness of heavenly truth, and the reasonableness of that truth having all the advantage in its presentation to the minds of men which deliberate preparation for the work of the preacher may secure for it.

It is a very usual procedure in reasoning to look first at

* Delivered at the close of a session of Knox' College, Toronto.

the presumptive probabilities in favour of a conclusion in which one has confidence, on its own merits, before going into a positive proof. In arguing, for example, the inspiration of the writers of the New Testament, we feel as if already the point were half made out, when we have found evidence of the inspiration of the Old Testament writers; or, on the question of the canon, as to whether it be a matter of erudition and human testimony, or of revelation,—this is already far towards being determined, when we satisfy ourselves that the ancient Scriptures were committed as the very “oracles of God” into the hands of parties divinely charged with the keeping of them. For, how easy is the inference, that, as the same necessity exists for a well authenticated rule of faith now as in former ages—the interests of truth being equally precious—the providence of God would anticipate the perils inseparable from any just grounds of doubt, on so primary and momentous a question! So, here also, we have but to look at the Old Testament, and find the principle standing out in bold relief, that for the good of all some should be separated to sacred offices; that the very outworks or subordinate parts of the temple service were to be committed to hands carefully chosen, and the work to be done according to exactly prescribed rules. But, especially to the service of the altar how sacredly was the approach guarded; and how impressive the recognition of this in New Testament language in connection with the very assumption of office by the Redeemer Himself: He “glorified not Himself to be made an high priest, but was called of God as was Aaron”!

If the thought were to occur that the exclusive character

of the offices of the Levitical economy was only in harmony with the local and temporary system of Judaism; if it should be thought that, the temple and the altar having passed away, the precedent is the less relevant—though we have distinct recognition of the analogy between the service of the altar and the Gospel in the reasonings of Paul himself—there is another standing out precedent among that people in whose affairs the Almighty took so immediate an interest. We read not only of the schools of the prophets, but of priests, and Levites, and scribes, who, in the character of public teachers, were charged with the instruction of their brethren, and at whose lips they were to learn the law. It is a mistake to suppose that the prophets whom God from time to time raised up constituted the ministry of those ages. These prophets were extraordinary and inspired men, whose appearance was occasional; and at some junctures in the history of that people, they had no prophet. Their ordinary ministry consisted of priests and Levites, who became learned in the law by study. For this end—as Lightfoot and others who treat of the Jewish constitutions have shown—they were disposed into no less than forty-eight cities, from whence, as from so many colleges, they were sent forth to teach the people. And in the time of the second temple, when the spirit of prophecy had departed, they must have specially depended on such a learned ministry, when the very language in which the Scriptures were written was comparatively unknown, and interpreters were required in each synagogue, to render it into the common tongue.

But, when we come to the New Testament, what do we

find? We find at one time a body of twelve men, at another a body of seventy, sent out by Jesus as His messengers, to preach the kingdom of God. We find how, after the ascension, by an oracular voice it was said, "Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them." We find the apostle giving charge to Timothy to commit the things which he had heard to faithful men (or trustworthy—*πιστοίς*), who should be able to teach others also. "Lay hands suddenly on no man" is his express caution. I do not at present enter into the question whether Timothy and Titus were bishops of Ephesus and of Crete. In the charge to ordain elders in every city, given to the latter, our Episcopalian friends see a proof, of course, of his episcopal authority. We Presbyterians—besides the evidence on the face of the Epistles, that neither Timothy nor Titus was appointed to any fixed diocese, but both were sent forth and recalled as extraordinary evangelists, or helpers of the apostles, as occasion for their ministrations occurred—we see in the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, and the fact that the very Apostles acted with Presbyters in the ordinary work of the early church, that they (the Apostles) were just in this way providing for the continued exercise of these functions, including the power to ordain, by the ordinary officers of the church, when they themselves, the extraordinary, should be withdrawn. But, on any construction of such passages, the position we take at present holds good. Whether by the hands of one or by the hands of a plurality, laying on of hands rashly, indiscriminately, is forbidden. Presbyters there were to be in every city.

Timothy was to commit the things he had heard to trustworthy men. And see the description, in those letters, of the qualifications of the "Episcopos,"—"holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus i. 9).

It is scarcely necessary that we should refer to additional evidences of its being the will of God that, to the end of time, there should be an order of men called pastors and teachers, elders and overseers of the flock of Christ; and these pastors, too, distinct from other rulers, as having it for their chief employ to labour "in word and doctrine." There is but one passage in the New Testament that with the least plausibility, as it appears to us, can be brought in justification of the idea that to teach and preach belongs to all Christian disciples,—and indeed no one denies that both by his life, and by use of private conversation, every Christian may preach, or spread the good tidings. It is said (Acts viii.) that they who were scattered abroad on the persecution about Stephen, "went everywhere preaching the word." We rather think that some, in reading this passage do not advert to the fact, that, though universal terms are used in the first verse,—"they were all scattered abroad except the apostles,"—it is not said in the fourth verse that all who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word; it is simply, "they who were scattered abroad." And it is surely a good reason for taking this with limitation, that the very next verse again tells us that the dispersion brought Philip, a companion of Stephen, and one of the seven, to a city of Samaria; thither he went and

preached Christ to them, performing miracles also.* And only follow the narrative out, you find the instruction of the Ethiopian eunuch provided for by this same Philip being detached and directed by the Spirit of God himself to proffer his aid, in the interpretation of the word of prophecy, to the stranger. And yet, as illustrating still further our present position, the apostles having once heard that Samaria had received the word of God, all is so done in order, that two of their own number are sent down by authority of the apostolic college, to do what none less than apostles could do,—impart the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Finally, our brief induction would not be complete without our noticing, how the later books of Scripture are the most express in warning against erroneous teachers, and directing to make trial of “spirits.” And in the very closing book of the canon, we see, in the directions addressed to the angel of more than one church, that the constituted ecclesiastical authorities are reckoned with as charged with the responsibility of suffering or prohibiting others to teach.

It were a very unworthy aim, were we to insist on such a subject only for the sake of magnifying spiritual offices. Our desire that the work of evangelists be well done is so much stronger than any jealousy we feel that any part of

* I would not lay stress on the difference between the two words *εὐαγγελιζόμενοι* and *ἐκήρυσσεν*, used in the two verses, for without doubt the former is more than once applied in this same chapter to the public and official proclamation of the gospel message; yet it is to be remarked that the sacred writer, in passing from the statement concerning the dispersed, applies the latter term in distinction to the official preacher.

the work should be done by others, that we would gladly say: Would that all the Lord's people were prophets! if, on any fair reading of the law and testimony in the first place, and any fair consulting with the teachings of history, we could see that good has resulted from the adoption of the principle of lay preaching. But from the spirit in which a standing ministry is often decried, and the very general association of this cry with a mutilated Gospel, or a defective exhibition of the truth, we feel warranted in still insisting on the necessity of a regular course of preparation for those who are to handle the mysteries of the kingdom, or mould the religious opinions of their fellow-men. And if, as it is pleasing to know, sects which are supposed to have discarded learning, are, after all, applying themselves to correct the mistakes of their predecessors, or, as may be the case, to supply what these had less opportunity, though willing, to provide; it is to be hoped that we need not so very laboriously defend a position which few venture very deliberately to assail, as rather turn an eye inward upon ourselves, inquiring whether the power of the pulpit might not be more effectively worked; whether by anything wanting in the matter or manner of our preaching we may not be hindering the Gospel, or diluting and impoverishing the spiritual aliment which is designed to nourish and perfect living souls.

Happily, at least those whom I address are unanimous in the opinion that the Gospel, and not the Law, is the power of God unto salvation. The time has long passed, surely, among Protestant and Presbyterian churches, when the law or moral code was substituted for the doctrine

of the cross, and when it was thought unsafe to proclaim the doctrines of free grace in the hearing of all men. I do not suppose that these are darkened among *us* by any admixture even of semi-Pelagian errors, or schemes for adjusting gospel truth to flattering theories of the sufficiency of the human will. We are agreed, I suppose, in believing that the law, apart from the gospel, is the ministry of condemnation to fallen man; and that truly for the sake of the law itself, that is, as we would bring men to love the law, would seat it thoroughly in their affections as well as consciences, we must keep before men's minds the great theme of Calvary. It is according to all the philosophy of our nature, that mere expositions of duty, mere denunciations of wrath, will not humble and win the spirit of guilty and depraved man; that the temper to which alone these can form is either the spirit of self-righteous confidence and presumption, or, reversely, of despondency and fear, which again leads on to discontent and reckless living. It is the Gospel which is spirit and life; which, while it crosses no designs of the law, carries with it truths unknown to the law, through the instrumentality of which holy affections are produced, and the life effectually reformed. These are the truths which sanctify, because associated with the mighty power and agency of the Holy Ghost. "Received ye the Spirit," demands the apostle, "by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" He plainly insinuates the answer.

But I venture to think that some pleading is necessary among us, though not for the gospel, yet for the preaching of a full gospel; nor am I sure that the value is appreci-

ated of an accurate knowledge of the relations among Divine truths, and of the service which systematic theology is capable of rendering to the expounder of Scripture; how essential it is that it go hand in hand with exegetical theology, in enabling us to expose false glosses, and to correct the hasty conclusions which superficial interpreters put upon detached passages of holy writ.

It is the great source of error in any science to build on a partial induction of data; and nothing is more characteristic of errorists in the religious world, than to take up with some favourite passage which coincides with foregone conclusions, and to answer all your reasonings from comprehensive views of the entire field of revelation, by saying they care nothing for system; "as for them, they go by the word alone." But, if what they reproach as system be indeed science—be the deliberate findings of a just logic, collecting the various data, concentrating the scattered lights of Scripture—they are in fact refusing the word; they deceive themselves in alleging that they keep to the word; while they are refusing those generalisations and harmonies which are the fruit of laborious comparisons of Scripture with Scripture. In standing on detached expressions, they are going by the sound of Scripture, not its sense. It is, in our opinion, the most necessary of all pulpit qualifications, to be able to assign the proper relation of doctrine to doctrine: no minute knowledge of words will enable, without this, to confute plausible errors.

It is not novices alone who go by the sound rather than the sense of Scripture, while ignoring the logical classification of doctrines. Take some present errors.

Take, for instance, the false views of the Atonement. Nothing is more remarkable than the free and easy way in which the impugnors of the doctrine of vicarious or legal satisfaction to distributive Justice have pressed into their service that class of passages which give prominence to sanctification, as a fruit of the Saviour's death. Whether Coleridge, or Maurice, or Bushnell, or Robertson (he of the broad-school):—they keep repeating the argument of which any school-boy might be supposed to perceive the hollowness, that it is the moral or subjective effect of Christ's death which has the prominence in the apostolic writings. They will have it that the purifying ascribed to Christ's blood is the *λουτρον*, not the *λύτρον*: He died to redeem us from all iniquity. He bore our sins on the tree that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness. Now, the advocate of the atonement need feel no difficulty in answering this: he knows that sanctification is an ulterior effect—a precious and necessary effect, but still an ulterior effect—of that atoning death whose primary design is reconciliation. The thing wanting in the exegesis of these parties is a knowledge of the relation of the guilt of sin to its power. And if the illustrations which Paul himself gives, especially in the Epistle to the Romans, of the dependence of sanctification on justification, and of both on union to Christ; if this, I might call it, systematic treatment of the question by the inspired apostle, do not suffice to correct their hasty conclusion; conscience itself might correct it, which, in perfect harmony with Paul's doctrine, seeks, as its primary necessity, deliverance from the guilt of sin; and with that, and only

with and through that, comes to purity as well as peace. The sanctification follows the reconciliation; and it is nothing to tell us that in some passages the *λουτρόν* rather than the *λύτρον* is recognised, when we know that in order to the one the other is implied as a pre-requisite.

Or, take the doctrine of Regeneration in its relation to faith, or the relations of *faith* and *life*; it cannot but be painful to the exegetical scholar, or the systematic theologian, to hear the confidence with which the semi-Pelagian, or, in more recent nomenclature, the Morristonian, talks of man's sufficiency, without any special subjective operation of the Spirit of God, to embrace the gospel message, and to appreciate spiritual truth. It is of course easy for him to quote a half dozen texts, or more, which assert that men must believe in order to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost—must believe in order to have life. He rings the changes on the Saviour's assertion of the guilty alienation of man's will: ("Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." —John v., 40) as if this necessarily implied the sufficiency of the depraved will. But does he look, or with anything else than a blind eye, at the cognate statement, within one chapter's reach of the other, which declares the disability of the carnal mind, or its dependence on supernal power, to move it Godwards and heavenwards? (John vi. 44.)

I have been at some pains to point out to those of you who have been attending in the senior theology class, the fallacies, at least three in number, which may be detected in the reasoning of those parties. You have only to distinguish life initial from ulterior; faith as an act from faith as a principle or habit; and the process of operation

on God's part from the rule of duty for man :—to be enabled to turn all their arguments.

But let us cast the mote out of our own eye. Let us consider if inattention to the relations of truth may not be injuriously affecting faith and practice in some other departments. Nothing, perhaps, has been more fruitful of error than the distinction that has been made between the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace—a distinction, no doubt, so explained by certain writers as to be harmless, but greatly misunderstood or perverted by others. Hence the word “condition”—so innocent a word in itself—has been either injuriously used by some, or, by others, has been perhaps with excessive zeal proscribed: and difficulties and uncertainties have been felt, what to do with it. There *is* a covenant—does it not seem?—made with *us*, as well as a covenant between the Father and the Son; and what is the condition of this covenant *with us*? Much misconception might have been avoided, if we saw that the covenant is just strictly one, or that every condition in what is called a second, is covered by the promises in the first. Conditions indeed they are in the sense of being necessarily antecedent to ulterior benefits; conditions, if we may so express it, in the covenant, but not of it. It may be interesting to a portion of my present auditors for us to say that I do not remember any one expressing this better than a lady writer,* who thus relieves some anxiety of her friend and correspondent: “there are no conditional promises in the Gospel but which are resolvable into unconditional grace.” It was well said!

* Mrs. Graham, New York.

We find, particularly in the department of Sacraments, this confusion of things to work not a little evil, affecting the sentiments and feelings of christian worshippers, in an important part of their duty, and a valuable privilege of christian fellowship. Are we sure that the teaching of the pulpit is not in some degree responsible for this? Is the proper relation of the sacraments to the covenant of redemption or grace, with distinctness enough, brought out, and with sufficient frequency insisted on? Does it not seem, from the prevailing phraseology on the subject, that the idea that is uppermost with many, is the engagement by us, the vow to the Lord, the dedication, the consecration? Now, there is dedication, there is consecration, both in Baptism and in the Lord's supper. But is not the idea of God's covenant with us through the Son, or with the Son for us, and the primary design of sacraments as signifying our participation in the blessings of that covenant, too much in the background of our conceptions? If we are to judge from the feelings with regard to the Lord's Supper with which many approach the sacred table, or which lead many to eschew approaching it at all, it is this bond, this pledge or engagement on man's side, that constitutes the essence of the whole matter. Might it not be kept more prominent in the teachings on this subject, that the Lord's Supper is the memorial of a covenant fulfilled, and a seal or pledge of the interest which every believer has in all its stipulated grace?—that it signifies our receiving from God rather than our giving? our engaging, doubtless, too; “our engaging to be the Lord's.” Yes; but see the caution of the learned and pious compilers of our formularies in bringing

this into their definition as a second idea, certainly not the first. They do not place it in the foreground; something else is there. And, in the order of men's thoughts, how important that this engagement or vow of ours keep its proper place! Not the less sure thus, but only the more sure, to be an ingenuous consecration in purpose, and an effective one in act and fulfilment. For, thus, with what an inviting aspect would sacraments be clothed, instead of a repulsive and discouraging aspect! Never will the soul bow in so deep and yet so joyful prostration at the shrine of duty, or set the seal so cordially to its vow of fealty to its heavenly Lord, as when this act of homage is associated with faith's recognition of the promise on God's own part, or when it looks first on the rich provisions of covenant grace, and is emboldened to appropriate these; and *that* under circumstances so powerfully appealing to the heart's best affections, or over the memorials of an event which supplies the most constraining motives to love and obey!

One other point—while a few moments remain to us—would we advert to. We advocate a full gospel. May not the gospel be mutilated by doctrines being in effect ignored in the pulpit, though not denied? Preachers, who yet claim to be reckoned evangelical—supposing themselves in this indeed to be only true to the design of a free gospel—give little or no place in their teachings to the doctrine of sovereign grace. It is admitted that our Saviour preached eternal electing love, and that the apostles embrace this in the gospel testimony; but it appears to be judged inexpedient to follow these precedents. The word must scarcely be let fall from our

lips ; it is held injurious to make other than rarest reference to such a subject. It is of Paul's hard things which a wise teacher will put in shade. To any who are thus minded I should like to suggest the question : May not your philosophy, as well as your theology, be at fault ? Are we the judges as to what effect any part of the testimony of God committed to us may exert on the human mind ? He who revealed this truth surely best knows what is adapted to stir the soul to its depth, and stimulate its activities. And if neither Christ nor His apostles concealed this part of the gospel of grace, are we not taking too great a responsibility in standing between God and the souls of His creatures, withholding a part of His counsel which may be seen by the Divine Wisdom to be, in the hands of the Spirit, a power for good ? Such teachers say it is a discouraging doctrine : It naturally rouses such prejudices, and provokes such questionings, that their message from a God of love can only be hindered by it. But what if your supposed kindness to the gospel hearer be cruelty ? May not the discernment of the sovereignty as well as the freeness of grace pertain to a salutary humiliation of the sinner in order to his being exalted ? I may, in putting this truth in abeyance, be contributing to nurse that natural pride of the heart which this is meant to subdue ; may be fostering the presumption which turns the very freeness of grace to one's own injury ; delaying the acceptance of what he may fancy to be less precious, because so common ; or flattering himself with some idea that the gift proffered flows from the very necessity of the divine nature, a thing so cheap that it may be got at any

time—ray, as to which the human will possesses a final sovereignty, independent of the rulings of Heaven itself. What if to the realising of his real position as a debtor to grace, this be one constituent element wanting in your version of the message of mercy, which, if present, would only move to a more humble and grateful reception, but more earnest withal, of a boon seen to be precious as well as free? Do not seek, I would say to the preacher, to mend the Gospel, nor think it necessary, in order to conciliate human prejudice, that you should be apologists for the Spirit of Inspiration, or play the part of patron to Paul, discreetly hiding what is offensive in *his* own version!

And finally, let experience be fairly appealed to—no need to shun the appeal to history in this matter. What is the testimony bequeathed to us by men who were observant of the work of God, in times and amidst scenes of remarkable revival? How does an Edwards in the new world depon? How a Toplady in the old? These have deponed to the eminent blessing attending on a full exhibition of the doctrine of grace in the times of refreshing which they beheld. And from the continent of Europe a fact comes attested by a much honoured revivalist, one of the Haldane brothers, that nothing was more signally blessed to induce salutary reflection and searching of heart in studious academic minds, tinctured with the theology of German or Swiss schools, than the full exposition of the doctrine of Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, of the sovereignty as well as riches and fulness of Divine mercy.*

* The following beautifully ingenuous reflection of Dr. Chalmers on Rom. ix., occurs in his latest or posthumous publication:—"Hor. Bibl.

But, though we must blame the omission of a great truth, presented in the sacred page as belonging to the consolation and the building up of the saints, as well as the conversion of the sinner, we are no advocates of a disproportionate share of your ministrations being given to it. The whole circle of truth should be traversed; and in this all are at one, that the central place should be given to the doctrine of "Christ crucified," as that around which the whole system of revelation revolves, and from which, as from the sun in the natural world, all light and heat radiate. But may I not suggest that even the most precious doctrine may fall comparatively stale on the ear, if set forth with insipid sameness, or in words sluggishly chosen? The high theme should have all the advantage which it may derive from being presented with the cognate themes of the majesty of the divine Lawgiver; His love; His truth; His faithfulness; the relation of the transactions of a past eternity to the developments of time; the parts sustained by the Divine persons in the economy of redemption; the various offices sustained by Christ; His various relations to His people, as identified with them not in the unity of the covenant alone, but in that spiritual

Sabbaticæ.—"Ever blessed be Thy name that Thou hast enabled me to acquiesce in the profound mysteries of this chapter, and yet to hold inviolate all the duties and activities of the Christian life. I desire to receive all that is said of God's sovereignty without reserve and without qualification. Perhaps I may have erred in overlaying the doctrine too much with the demonstrations that I have attempted of its perfect consistency with the calls of the Gospel, and the obligations under which we lie to act upon its primary overtures. . . . I think I can now perceive not only the perfect innocence, but even salutary influence of these transcendental themes, as far as they are revealed in Scripture, on the young disciple—when called upon to 'make his calling and election sure.'"

and mystical bond on which He himself so largely expatiates; the union and communion with Him in his death and in his life, in his resurrection and in his glory.

And let the Law be preached, and more preached, in the fullest, minutest, exposition of its requirements, if only accompanied with the full enunciation of the motives to obedience. Of nothing do we feel more certain than that a right appreciation of the scheme of Christian doctrine will only dispose to the higher appreciation of all moral obligations, and will better enable the preacher to illustrate the spirituality of the law. I only wish the morality of the pulpit were more minute; the inner Christian life traced, the conflicts, the trials, the victories of the new nature: in other words, the cross of Christ preached in its moral and exemplary, as well as meritorious, influence on our death to sin and life to righteousness. One thing, however, I cannot reconcile with an adequate estimate of our great and special message: using texts, the richest perhaps in Scripture, as mere mottoes for essays on some subordinate point, in neglect of their main design.* There are but fifty and two Sabbaths in a year: surely the choice opportunity afforded by such texts should not be lost, or the subsidiary lesson preferred to the direct and

* Dr. Willis here referred to discourses he had heard delivered to large and earnest auditories on John xvii. 4, and Heb. vii. 16; the one text being chosen to enforce the general obligation on every man to know the work given him to do, to try to be able to say like the Saviour, "I have finished it;" the other, or rather its latter words, separated from the rest, made a mere motto for an argument on immortality, or for pressing the deep interests involved in "endless life": all good points in their time and place, but to which the greater meaning of the Scripture was, for the time, sacrificed, while most precious spiritual food was withheld!

primary, to the loss indeed of the subsidiary design itself.

I conclude by reminding candidates for the ministry—may I not put others also in remembrance?—how suggestive of our duty is the description of our calling. It is that of preachers of “the word,” “preachers of Christ,” “stewards of the mysteries of God,” “shepherds,” pastors, appointed to feed the flock. Limiting myself at present to this last, I think there is much in it that appeals to our fidelity, our conscientiousness, our love. We are not to strain figures. The *flock* of Christ is composed of intelligent beings. They know the Shepherd’s voice from that of strangers; and we shall all rejoice, I dare say, the more, as they, like the Bereans, search the scriptures and prove what they hear by what they read: but there is a large class of Christian hearers who, some from amiable deference to the supposed superior knowledge of a pastor, others from the less worthy cause of too much indifference or unconcern, leave themselves much in the preacher’s hands. They readily take on the image of that version of the truth which the preacher of their choice, and the man of their friendship, uses to serve up to them. Whatever may be said of the censoriousness of hearers, I think the more prevailing rule is a facile deference to a preacher’s views, and an aptitude in hearers to adjust themselves to the standard of opinion, and perhaps of religious feeling too, which is set forth weekly from the pulpit of their own sanctuary. There is among Protestants as well as Romanists, though less, we think, among the latter, a disposition to take a great deal, even in religious matters, on trust, or to

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be easily satisfied with the version of the Gospel—albeit meagre and defective—which the recurrence of the Sabbath brings from the lips of “our own man.” I only use this consideration, that I may caution preachers, against being satisfied with themselves because attending auditories may seem content.

It is a frequent observation, how soon and surely most apostles of error surround themselves with devoted adherents. And soon by a hundred tongues their theories are echoed and circulated; all the more intolerant, some of them, in proportion as their adoption of the opinions has been recent, or their knowledge is superficial. But the conscientious shepherd will not take advantage of the simplicity of the sheep. We press this very fact—this ready recumbency of many hearers on the preacher’s views,—in the way of appeal to your fidelity, your very generosity. That so much may depend on his statements of Christian truth, we would set before the preacher as a motive to solicitous diligence, in the cultivation of every gift and talent which may contribute to the effectiveness of his ministry.

A great power is lodged in your hands, if only you rightly wield it. Whatever may be the discouragements of gospel preachers, we cannot plead that we dwell among a people who shut their ears to our messages: they wait for you; they are ready to hear you for your cause. Always allowing for the enmity to God of the corrupt heart, I may say you have the educational prepossessions of a community so far Christianized on your side. The members of God’s sacramental host dispersed through the

land are with you. They go before you, these men of prayer; in their hearts and hands they bear you up. And there is protection for all—full freedom; no noise of the archer in the place of the drawing of spiritual waters. Only bring forth the fruits of prayerful study, and of the conscientious application of your minds to your work; you need not fear but that, besides higher rewards, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your pains will be by many appreciated :—you will have respect from all.

II.

ON THE GOSPEL CALL.*

It has often been stated as a difficulty, sometimes made a reproach, with regard to Calvinism, or the doctrines of grace most surely believed amongst us, that they hamper the free Gospel offer. It is thought that to require from all men the obedience of faith, is not reconcilable with the holding of a sovereign electing decree, or a definite atonement. If Christ has not redeemed all men by His death, then, is it not a mockery to address the Gospel invitation to all indiscriminately?

On this subject, as on others, it is necessary to guard against extremes:—to remember, on the one hand, that we *are* required to set forth the Gospel message in terms as encouraging as truth will permit, declaring the good news to every creature; not wantonly limiting universal terms; nay, with delight expatiating on their liberal and comprehensive design, in their true ascertained sense: on the other hand, not hiding any part of the counsel of God, nor mutilating the scheme of grace, by adapting the revelation of infinite wisdom and sovereignty to human prejudices.

Without, at present, seeking to deal with the views held

* A lecture at close of a session of College.

by Pelagians of the sufficiency of man to himself—as one whose state is so little affected by the Fall that he scarcely needs a Saviour; we have in view such theologians,—including men undeniably well affected to evangelic truth—as adopt the theory of universal redemption; either believing at same time a sovereign electing decree, as to the effective application of the benefit of the Atonement; or, denying election, and referring the result in each case to the will of the hearer of the word. It is deserving of remark, that they who in the fourth or fifth century first formally broached the doctrine of universal redemption were the same who in part adopted the Pelagian idea as to the power of the human will; hence called in the language of church history semi-Pelagians: and it seems a presumptive argument in favour of our usually received Calvinistic doctrine, that modern opponents of particular or definite atonement either avowedly assert the sufficiency of the will of depraved men to entertain and comply with the Gospel invitation, or feel necessitated by their theory to employ language not capable of being harmonised with the Bible delineations of our moral and spiritual inability.

Two questions, then, require to be treated:—

I. Does the Scripture warrant us to say that Christ has atoned for all men, the believing and the unbelieving alike?

II. Does our declaring this, either in the sense in which those who deny election explain the design of the atonement, or that of those who hold a special election along with an indefinite atonement, give us any advantage in our addressing sinners?

I. The first resolves itself into a question of exegesis. There is no dispute whatever about the fact of universal terms being used ;—no dispute that Christ, in some sense of the expression, gave himself “a ransom for all.” But, unless we are to satisfy ourselves with the sound of words in contradistinction to what can be demonstrated to be their sense, it cannot be maintained, indeed is not held by the assertors of universal redemption, that these words mean that Christ has died to make salvation sure to all. Nor will any one acquainted with the idiom of the Greek or English tongue insist that such phrases are necessarily to be taken in the sense of absolute universality, especially when more definite language is used in the very context suggesting a limited interpretation, and natural reasons can be given for terms universal in a certain sense having been employed. No one can deny that, according to the usage of the sacred writers, “all men” *may* mean, in some cases *must* mean, men of all nations indiscriminately, in distinction from one nation exclusively. Professor Moses Stuart (consistently or not consistently with some of his other positions) allows that to take such terms in the sense of universality would be absurd. On Hebrews ii. 9, “He tasted death for every man” (or rather, for every *one* :—“man” being not in the original, though it is probably on the supposed presence of the word “man,” that this verse has been reckoned by some the very strongest hold of the doctrine of universal redemption) he—Mr. Stuart—says of this and a considerable list of passages, such as John iii. 16, 1 John ii. 2, that the words “all” and “every one” mean Jew and Gentile alike; being used in

opposition to the idea "that to the Israelitish church alone the Messiah was given, or the blessings of the kingdom of heaven were appropriately or exclusively theirs."

This style of expression is used on other subjects: and any one who should insist that universal terms are to be taken in an unqualified sense must soon find himself perplexed by the consequences of such a rule of interpretation. It is said the "whole world wondered after the beast." It is said that "all the world was taxed" in the days of Cyrenius the governor. Are we to believe, then, that literally all nations have embraced the superstitions of Rome? Is the idea of thousands of witnesses having protested against the anti-Christian usurpation a myth? or did ever the decree of Cæsar extend to the entire world of mankind?

True, it is said that "the Gospel had come into all the world, and was preached to every creature under heaven:" Can more be possibly meant, consistently with fact and history, than that, not exclusively of any nation, the Gospel is now addressed to men anywhere and everywhere, as Providence opens a door of acceptance? Finally, if universal redemption is taught in those passages that affirm that Christ has died for all; how shall the advocate of universal atonement deny universal salvation, since, in like terms, Christ says He "will draw all men" unto himself? (John xii. 32). *We* rejoice to preach this, as expressive of an effectual, and no contingent or conditional, redemption: that Christ lives for all in that sense in which He died for all—for men of all countries—of all conditions, of all characters. It is plain, however, we should be false comforters were we to

say that all men shall be *effectually* drawn to the Saviour: the poor soul sees it to be so. And if it be alleged that the words hold literally true, inasmuch as a certain sufficient grace, though not effectual, is secured for all men: besides that you have to deal with the fact that not all, nor half of mankind, have been privileged to receive the message; we find the Apostle denying a moral or spiritual sufficiency, as belonging to any of our fallen race, to receive the message when presented, or to love and obey the truth (Rom. viii. 7: 1 Cor. ii. 14).

It may be observed, then, that what is called universal redemption is no effectual, but rather a conditional or contingent, redemption. Christ's dying for all, according to the advocates of universal atonement, means not His having satisfied Divine justice in such sense as to render it a necessary righteous thing with God to justify, or set free from condemnation, all those atoned for. The most evangelical assertors of the theory—such as Mr. Fuller, Dr. Wardlaw, and others—assert that there lies no obligation on God, even when atoned, to pardon or save any but as His mercy inclines, or His wisdom may direct: only, the channel being thus provided for the honourable egress of mercy, a decree of sovereign election chooses among the redeemed—if thus they may be said to be “redeemed”—ordaining some to life, and leaving the rest to condemnation. This is what the alleged universality amounts to. Others, explaining and distinguishing, say God, has absolutely chosen, and Christ has purposely died for some only; but yet for others also to the extent that all hindrances, from the side of God's justice, are removed, that being satisfied;

and the law being by Christ fulfilled, nothing stands between any sinner of Adam's race and a full salvation, but his own alienation of heart: yet the election, they, the Calvinistic portion of the assertors of this view, hold, extends not to all, only to some. In other words, they say Christ died for all alike, so far as the nature or effect of the atonement is concerned. But this is no atonement, really, in the sense of a commutative satisfaction. The love of Christ, which we thought had its greatest exemplification in laying down his life a ransom—the love of God, commended as so great in giving his Son, is by the theory a thing so indefinite, till another, and as it were, posterior decree of election distinguishes among the ransomed; that it is difficult to see how it can be called love, except when it takes its form in this latter decree; or can be reckoned anything more than a general good will, a sympathetic leaning to the relief of misery, a desiring rather than providing for the salvation of all! What is the Gospel message, then, on this theory; or what benefit has the propounder, of the Gospel by it, which the assertor of particular redemption or atonement has not, in dealing with sinners of mankind? When they affirm that Christ so died that all who believe shall find in Him a sufficient salvation, they only say what the advocates of a definite atonement can also say—and do say. When they affirm more—that the unbelieving and the believing are alike atoned for; do they not raise in the mind the disturbing question, how God can be just in withholding salvation from any for whom his law has received satisfaction, or not including in electing love *all* for whom the precious redeeming blood has been shed?

In proclaiming the love of God, how shall I speak of it?—Shall I say that Christ loved all, but the Father only loves some? Shall the preacher declare that Christ has died for the sins of all, but has not risen for the justification of all, nor intercedes for all? Shall he say that Christ has offered sacrifice for all the guilty indefinitely, but that he is no living head to all, no second Adam, whose acts or sufferings reach certainly or effectually those whom he represented? One feels, in uttering such a Gospel, that it is strangely incongruous with the whole tone of Scripture announcements: while, so far as it rests on the use of universal terms, “all men,” and “the whole world,” in connection with the death or propitiation of Christ, we have seen it assumes a universal sense which either Scripture usage disallows, or which, if adopted, ought in all consistency to be applied to universal salvation. May we not ask, too, Where is the warrant for holding a redemption of so negative a kind,—a redemption from the curse which implies no purchase of the blessing? an atoning, or propitiating, which secures no actual peace? Are not the two things associated in almost every passage which speaks of the death of God’s Son?—the deliverance from the curse with the conveyance of the blessing?—His being made sin with the ransomed being made righteousness in him? Or, if the atonement means reconciliation by Christ’s death, is not that declared *à fortiori* to infer salvation by His life? Not only is there no necessity for separating what Scripture thus joins together, in our addresses to our fellow-men; but we narrow the ground on which we stand while beseeching men to receive the

message of life. Why keep back or put in abeyance the fact, that a people have been so atoned for that the Saviour claims of the Father their relief from the curse,—and shall, without fail, see in them of the travail of his soul? Why expatiate so exclusively on the virtue of his death, and so little on the power of his endless life? Why say alone that He died for all, and not urge the encouragement that He liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by him? “All that come”—This is the Scripture language: Our business is not, while we propose the gospel offer, with any secret decree. Those who differ from us hold that decree in common with us. They know no more than we, who the elect are, and we, no more than they, seek to address our invitations to the elect. But we feel as if we brought a power to bear on the mind, which is wanting on the other theory, when we preach a redemption that is complete, so far as it goes—that secures the power of faith for which an indefinite atonement provides no security, and assures alike of the love of Father, Son, and Spirit, each one who comes, and enters trustfully into union with Him who is exalted to confer every blessing He has purchased; to make “kings and priests” of all who are “washed in His blood.”

The main ground, then, on which, as it appears to us, the indefinite invitation rests, is just the command of God, and the connection which the promise establishes between believing and being saved. The ground is often represented as lying in the sufficiency of the atonement for all; and if its inherent value be meant, all agree that we cannot expatiate too much on the infinite preciousness of Christ's

blood. If such had been the will of God, it might have sufficed, for not only all men, but all worlds—for angels who fell, as well as for men. But, if the inherent value of Christ's obedience and suffering does not render these sufficient to save *any*, apart from the will of the Godhead, how can we say, apart from that will, it is sufficient for all? And it is at least no satisfying explanation of the words "Christ died for all," to say, that by the will of God it has this conditional sufficiency; while by the same will its efficacy is admitted to reach only to some.

We do right, we repeat, to enlarge on the infinite preciousness of the sacrifice, the all-cleansing virtue of that blood; but we feel that we can only know those for whose sake Christ sanctified himself, when the truth declared to all in common is received, as it only is received, by them to whom "He manifests the Father's name."

It may yet be alleged, though less consistently by those who hold in common with us an electing decree than by those who deny it, that only on the supposition of a universal atonement can responsibility be seen to attach to the unbeliever: whereas, on the supposition of definite atonement, the cause of any one's missing salvation lies with the decree of God. Here, on all sides, it is to be remembered, that the subject of the Divine decrees in connection with human agency and responsibility involves questions too high for us: this always being enough to content us, that the command or promise when obeyed and trusted to—in other words, the revealed decree as our only rule of action—will never be found opposed by any secret decree. It is not necessary that men should be able

to see the reason of every command, or to discern the harmony of all truths. This is not perfectly given to man in any department of duty or responsibility. He is called to act—to use certain means, as a matter of obligation, in reference to certain ends; which ends he cannot ascertain or determine till the means have been used. We see from the Bible that even the disclosure, in some cases, of the purpose of God, as to things rendered certain by His eternal counsel, neither in point of fact influenced the agents who brought about those purposes; nor is ever pleaded or allowed in Scripture as a palliation of their sin. Just so, however mysterious to us, God's certain appointments are every day brought about in consistency with the liberty of rational beings; so as that He stands free of direct causality in the production of sin, and the will stands consciously free of constraint in the sinning. The electing decree embraces the means with the end. But the decree of salvation and that of condemnation are brought about without violence to our rational nature: They on the one hand who reject the counsel of God do so most freely, and they who are ordained to eternal life do also most freely believe.

If it be objected to a special destination of the atonement, that we cannot assure each one to whom we address the Gospel that he has been predestinated to eternal life, or that Christ died to redeem him in particular—for these are really the same thing; we reply, That the command to trust in Christ is as reasonable as the command to preserve our own life or the life of others, though the appointed limit of life is unknown to us: and the sin of rejecting the

Gospel, like the sin of suicide or murder, may rest on considerations altogether independent of and unaffected by the fact of the event, in either case, coinciding with the Divine preordination. The supposed inconsistency of the general Gospel offer vanishes the more, if we define that offer according to the formula: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." To proclaim this in the hearing of all is our message; and if, by accepting it, those ordained to life are ascertained; in rejecting, the "enmity" of "the carnal mind" may be developed, as opposed to the truth itself. The Gospel brought nigh may be the occasion of testing and evoking that enmity: and so we find the Saviour attributes unbelief to men's loving the darkness. This He represents as the "condemnation." It is not imputed to sovereignty; though neither does He conceal the sovereignty of God in withholding from some the illuminating grace bestowed on others. "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."

As the result of the whole matter, it appears,

I. That they who hold election in common with us do in no degree lessen the difficulty of the subject, as to reconciling Divine sovereignty with free agency: And,

II. That they are led, in common with the deniers of election, unduly to exalt the will of the creature. No passage has been oftener torn from its context than the Saviour's words: "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life:" The words have been rashly interpreted as amounting to this, that only in the will of the sinner lies

his disability. No account is made of his blindness of understanding; or of the bondage of his will itself: it would seem to be forgotten that he needs redemption by power as well as by price; the liberation of the very will. But the Saviour does not ignore this in His teaching: if He says, Ye will not come; charging guilt, alienation of heart on the unbelievers, He says also, No man can come to me, except the Father draw him. In the one saying, He charges alienation; in the other, reminds us of our spiritual inability. How unlike this is the style of address into which the advocates of conditional, called universal, redemption, are betrayed! We find Dr. Wardlaw expostulating, through several entire pages, in such terms as these: * "You can come to Christ, if you will: you can believe in Him, or trust in Him, if you will,"—which means of course, You can love the truth, you can receive spiritual things if you will; or, indeed, it is virtually to say, "you will if you will,"—"you would love the truth, if you did not hate." So, some divines of New England, distinguishing and refining, say, The sinner's impotency is "moral" not "natural,"—in a sense true, but not in their sense: They mean that the will is not only free from external coercion, but from any such vitiation of its powers as to disable from acquiescing in the design of the Gospel. The divines of Princeton have justly refused this definition of moral inability. To call the sinner's aversion of will his disability, they rightly reason, is much the same as if a man, who has the ability to walk, but will not, should be said to be unable to walk. The disability is moral and not

* See his work on the Atonement.

natural, only in this sense, that it is the effect of the Fall: It is safe to say with Augustine that nothing evil in our nature is from God: it is of man, or of the devil. But what good in flattering human pride? or what wisdom in concealing the real amount of man's spiritual powerlessness? In plying the Gospel invitation, while we are to bring near the heavenly succours, and open wide the door of invitation, our hope of success is not in diluted views of man's lost state, but in the power of the Spirit of God, and the promised blessing with the word of Him who hath given the word. We are, in no hampering, stinted, terms, to unfold the rich provisions of grace; but neither are we to conceal what Christ did not conceal—what His apostles did not conceal. The fact that a people has been given to the Son by the Father, and that no one that cometh shall be cast out, are parts of the one testimony. For aught we know, the doctrine of a sovereign election—the warning, that broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and that the gate to life is strait, and the way narrow; may be fitted to work a salutary fear in the proud child of Adam. It may be that in concealing an electing purpose, a discriminating grace, we hinder the effect of that very appeal to the human heart, by which we desire to awaken anxiety and stimulate diligence. For we *are* to press diligence; to urge striving—labouring—striving to enter in at the strait gate, labouring for the bread that perisheth not. Faith, though a work of God in us, is our act also, or work, in dependence on grace.

No doctrine of sovereign election, no theory of human inability, is right or safe which would relieve the rational

being from action,—immediate action. The objections pretended to be founded on these, as if excusing from responsibility, vanish before the light of conscience. Man knows and feels his responsibility. His difficulties in reconciling human agency with the Divine plans and purposes, hinder not his efforts in other departments. Where an earthly object is to be sought with hope, he waits not for the solving of metaphysical problems: why should he here? The paralytic, without power of hand, at Christ's bidding stretched forth his hand.

We may only induce a false confidence by concealing any part of the truth, or healing the disease slightly. Are we wiser than Paul, who said, It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy? May the servant not be contented to risk the effect of such testimonies concerning human insufficiency as were judged safe by the Master, when He said: "Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes;" "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep?"

Enough for the hearer that he can be assured that every comer is welcome. Enough for the preacher that he is bidden invite, yea, charge in God's name; whose commandment it is that we believe in His Son (1 John iii. 23). And even when, like the prophet, as he looks on the spiritually dead, he can only answer the question, Can these bones live? with, "Lord, thou knowest!" he must do his required part in beseeching men to "hear and live."

III.

NEW TESTAMENT ETHICS: QUESTIONS SOLVED.*

THOUGH on some occasions such as the present, I have considered mainly what was best adapted to impress the minds of the studious youth about to disperse for the season; and have governed myself in the choice of topics by the idea that I was delivering a valedictory address, I follow a different course to-day. I think it gives a pleasant variety to our exercises, to expatiate sometimes on a theological or philosophical subject, of common concern to the student, and to the considerable class of ministers and of the general community who favour us with their attendance on these occasions. And so I venture, at this time, to solicit your attention to some principles partly theological: partly coming under the head of ethics and jurisprudence—of great value, as I deem, to the interpretation of the Bible, and fitted in their application to exert a happy influence on public and private sentiment.

To state my Thesis with all possible plainness, and to indicate at once to what a variety of questions the principles I would illustrate are applicable, I shall put it in the form of a series of queries, thus: How do we explain the

* Lecture delivered at close of College, April 1860.

precepts of non-resistance in the New Testament, so as to vindicate the adoption of free political institutions, and such forcible resistance of tyrants as was exemplified in the British revolution? How do we limit the indefinite precepts given in the apostolic writings to wives, to children, to servants—precepts of obedience—"in all things?" Thirdly, How do we reconcile the right or duty of States to concern themselves with religious truth, and to frame their laws on the basis of Christianity, with the apparent silence of the New Testament on this subject, or with its apparent exclusive reference to the duty of individuals and churches? A still larger variety of questions than is indicated by this threefold distribution falls to be decided by the same general rules of interpretation which are applicable to these. The question of polygamy, or the toleration of it; the definition of the degrees of consanguinity and affinity within which marriage may be contracted; the question of a legal provision for the poor; belong to the same heads of valuable moral casuistry, if not actually included in one or other of the queries just stated.

You will at once see, that I invite you not to abstract speculations of little moment as concerns the affairs of life, the rights of men, and the relations of society. Far otherwise. I know few of greater importance. I am obliged to say, also, that I think few less perfectly understood, or more requiring to be asserted and expounded. Nor is it the less necessary to assert or reaffirm the principles we are to defend, that some of them at least are, all but universally, admitted. For, the common sense of mankind, true to the innate conviction of right, sometimes practically

adopts the right conclusion, where the speculative student lags behind. Yet it is unhappy when the theories of professional classes are in contradiction to the right decisions of ordinary men. This must occasion, that if society do not retrograde, at least valuable principles, where already practically acknowledged, shall not be impressed on the public mind with the adequate frequency and earnestness which may ensure their being carried fully out, where their application is still to be desiderated.

It is only a confirmation of the principles we argue for, that in spite of the non-recognition, or hesitating and partial recognition of them by a large number of theological interpreters, they have won their way to very general acceptance by jurists and legislators. In fact, it just the more proves the Bible to be of God; or illustrates that part of its internal evidence which is derived from the sympathy of natural conscience with its dictates.

First, then, How do we vindicate for the civil body the right to demand a constitution, in the face of the plain inculcations of unresisting submission to whatever power chances to be in the ascendant? Can anything, it has been asked, be plainer than those words of the New Testament, that "the powers that be are ordained of God," and "whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God?" So, St. Paul: and St. Peter says, "Be subject to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake."

The days were when in pulpits and seats of learning such a rendering was given to these and kindred passages as flattered the most absolute pretensions of princely preroga-

tive, and left no protection to the most sacred rights of citizens. It was from the University of Oxford, that time-honoured sanctuary of intellectual light, proceeded this extravagant and almost incredible proffer of passive obedience, in a congratulatory address to King James or his consort. Here it is in the old Latin; it were a pity to disinter it:—

"Cum principibus etiam tyrannis nec in subditorum salutem, sed exitium natis, quamvis aliis male meritum, obsequium tamen paratissimum debeamus prestare, et eas deosculari manus quibus laceramur."

One cannot help imagining how nauseous such an address would be to the ear of the Sovereign—constitutional and beloved—who now occupies the British throne! Happily for mankind and for our country, its people, and its princes too, have been used to a theory of limited monarchy which implies in its acceptance for ages past a departure from such slavish doctrine. Despite the lucubrations of a Salmasius, a Filmer, a Hobbes, and a Selden, the patriarchal theory, and the right of kings to govern wrong, has been consigned to the tomb of the Capulets: Thanks to the efforts of a George Buchanan, a Locke and Milton, a Russell and Sydney!—thanks to our homely but holy Rutherford!—the principle, if not of "*Vox populi vox Dei*," of "*Lex Rex*," has triumphed, and given to constitutional law its supremacy over individual will: not subverting monarchy, but establishing all that is valuable in it on a firmer basis, while seating it in the intelligence and affections of a consenting people. Such consent Grotius well defines to be indispensable, especially to the bestowment of supreme power in succession.

Now, though *our* business is with the theology of this subject, it is interesting to remark how principles of natural law, long before these were expounded by a Grotius or a Puffendorf, yea, before the days of Kings Stephen or John, and the great charter—how, I say, principles of natural law guided our Saxon forefathers to assert the limitations of prerogative: For the Magna Charta did not initiate the privileges of the subject; it but restored ancient rights which tyrants had set by, and consolidated what they had sought to file away. Reason had taught men, comparatively rude in knowledge, that authority is set up for the end of the common good; and enabled them, without any body of hermeneutics, so to read Scripture as to understand that while magistracy was to be honoured as an ordinance of God, it ceased in effect to be God's ordinance at the point at which it became not the guardian of order, but the engine of oppression and injustice—the very thing from which it was ordained to protect. They saw in the same Apostle, who forbids wanton resistance, an example of constitutional resistance: they saw the same Paul, who counsels Christians to adjust their differences peacefully, appealing, when the occasion required it, from a provincial to an imperial tribunal; and they justly declined any exposition of the rights of princes which sanctified tyranny and legalised crime. What can Theologians do but give a name to those canons of interpretation which men acted on without naming them? They are such as these: He who has impressed on man the conviction of the eternal distinctions of right and wrong cannot contradict Himself by requiring by revelation what the light of nature forbids:

They are from the same God. We must harmonise Scripture with Scripture itself, says the theologian, and we must explain what is obscure by what is clear. We must not convert into rules of universal and permanent application what can be shown to rest on temporary grounds, and to which the circumstances of those addressed, or the avowed design of the writer, prescribed a limit. We must submit general or indefinite announcements of duty to the qualification of correlative statements elsewhere. I know not a happier affirmation of these principles than is to be found in the pages of Lord Macaulay, who, speaking of the British revolution, says :—

“The greatest Anglican doctors of that age had maintained that no breach of law or contract, no excess of cruelty, rapacity, or licentiousness, on the part of a rightful king, could justify his people in withstanding him by force. Some of them had delighted to exhibit the doctrine of non-resistance in a form so exaggerated as to shock common sense and humanity. They frequently and emphatically remarked that Nero was at the head of the Roman government when Saint Paul inculcated the duty of obeying magistrates. The inference which they drew was that, if an English king should, without any law but his own pleasure, persecute his subjects for not worshipping idols, should fling them to the lions in the Tower, should wrap them up in pitched cloth and set them on fire to light up Saint James’ Park, and should go on with these massacres till whole towns and shires were left without an inhabitant, the survivors would still be bound meekly to submit, and to be torn in pieces or roasted alive without a

struggle. The arguments in favour of this proposition were futile indeed, but the place of sound argument was amply supplied by the omnipotent sophistry of interest and of passion. Many writers have expressed wonder that the high spirited cavaliers of England should have been zealous for the most slavish theory that has ever been known among men. The truth is, that this theory at first presented itself to the cavalier as the very opposite of slavish. Its tendency was to make him not a slave but a freeman, by exalting one whom he regarded as his protector when republicans were dominant. The royalist had endured wrongs and insults which the restoration of the legitimate government had enabled him to retaliate. It had never crossed his imagination that a time might come when a king, a Stuart, would persecute the most loyal of the clergy and gentry with more than the animosity of the Rump or the Protector. The time had now arrived. It was now to be seen how the patience which churchmen had learned from the writings of Paul would stand the test of a persecution by no means so severe as that of Nero. The logic," adds Lord Macaulay, "which, while it was used to prove that Presbyterians and Independents ought to bear imprisonment and confiscation with meekness, had been pronounced unanswerable, seemed to be of very little force when the question was, whether Anglican bishops should be imprisoned, and the revenues of Anglican colleges confiscated. It had been often repeated from the pulpits of all the cathedrals in the land that the apostolical injunction to obey the civil magistrate was absolute and universal: that it was presumption to

limit a precept promulgated without any limitation in the word of God. Now, however, divines, whose sagacity had been sharpened by persecution, discovered flaws in the reasoning which had formerly carried conviction to their minds. The ethical parts of Scripture were not to be construed like Acts of Parliament or like the casuistical treatises of the schoolmen. What Christian really gave his cloak to the thieves who had taken his coat away? What Christian really turned the left cheek to the ruffian who had smitten the right? Both in the Old and New Testaments general rules were perpetually laid down unaccompanied by the exceptions. Thus there was a general command not to kill, unaccompanied by any reservation in favour of the warrior who kills in defence of his king and country. All the arguments which showed that the Quaker who refused to bear arms or to kiss the Gospels was unreasonable, might be turned against those who denied to subjects the right of resisting extreme tyranny by force. If it was contended that the texts which prohibited homicide, and the texts which prohibited swearing, though generally expressed, must be construed in subordination to the great commandment by which every man is enjoined to promote the welfare of his neighbours, and would be found, when so construed, not to apply to cases in which homicide or swearing might be absolutely necessary to protect the dearest interests of society, it was not easy to deny that the texts which prohibited resistance ought to be construed in the same manner."

"But how," concludes his Lordship, "could the resistance of Englishmen to such a prince as James be called

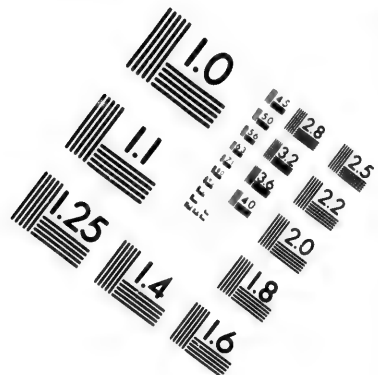
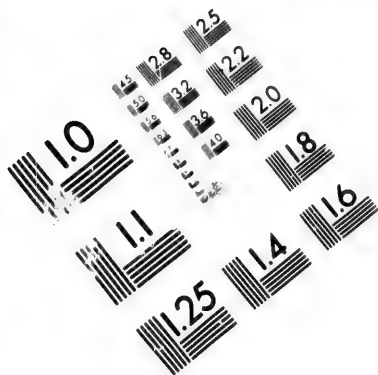
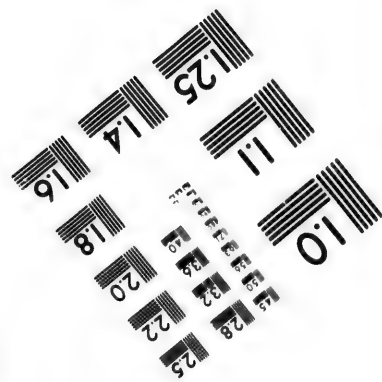
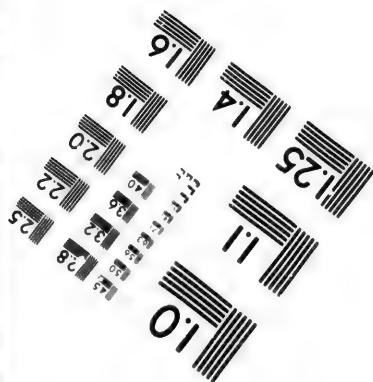
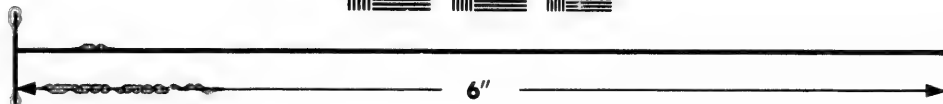
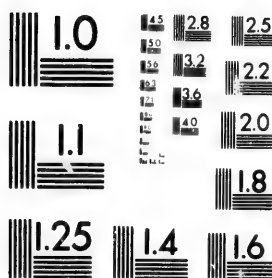


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rebellion? The English government was, by the confession of the most obsequious parties—whatever they might say in the heat of conflict—a limited monarchy. Yet how can a government be said to be limited if force is never to be employed, even in the last resort, for the purpose of maintaining the limitation? In Muscovy, perhaps, where the sovereign was absolute, it might be otherwise. But here prince and people were alike bound by the laws. It was therefore James who incurred the woe denounced against those who insult ‘the powers that be.’ It was therefore James who was resisting the ordinance of God; who was mutinying against that legitimate authority to which he ought to be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience’ sake; and who was, in the true sense of the words of Jesus, withholding from Cæsar the things which were Cæsar’s.”

The historian, here at least, is the accurate theologian, and shows by his very references to Scripture that he knew on this question how to harmonise the deliverances of the New Testament with itself, and with the law of nature. One passage which he points to I have often found of much use in connection with the second question we have proposed for solution,—that touching domestic rights:

II. It enables to reduce to absurdity the sophistical arguments by which the apologist for slavery seeks to convert the word of God to the service of that oppression. Of course, the apologist for it finds a few expressions here and there which seem to enjoin contentment with his lot

on the bondman;—requiring him to obey the froward as well as the gentle master, and to carry himself under the yoke as befits a good follower of Christ; counting his earthly superior worthy of all honour, that the doctrine of Christ be not blasphemed. We shall immediately show other false assumptions to be implied in the reasonings founded on such passages in defence of domestic tyranny, or of the imposition on a rational being of a yoke which ignores in him, even though a Christian disciple, every prerogative of reason and of conscience. But, at once, by the use of the passage just referred to, may the absurdity be exposed of the inferences deduced from these other passages, thus:—It is admitted to be the duty of a man, howsoever wronged, to manifest a non-retaliating spirit. *That* is the amount of the meaning of our Lord's injunction to turn the other cheek to him who has smitten you on the one. There are, indeed, who understand this literally,—though the error of such an interpretation was most emphatically confessed by the good Quaker who, when the ship he sailed on was about to be boarded by the pirate, grasped the handspike, and pushed him back, saying, as he applied the physical force: "Friend, I wish thee no evil; but thou hast no business here." We understand the expression figuratively, just as we understand the expression, "Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth." But, whether literally or figuratively taken, it is an express command of valuable import, and obligatory. It counsels meekness. It forbids revenge. Suppose, then, for we now treat it as a sort of middle term by which to test propositions,—admit that I am bound in

the case supposed not to return stroke for stroke,—will it be pleaded from this passage that a man has a right to strike his neighbour at pleasure? Does the fact that I am to cultivate the spirit in which I would suffer, rather than sin, decide *his* right to offer me violence? Would it afford a just ground for a law which should invest the smiter with impunity, or, for it comes to that, would proclaim a license to every one so disposed, to smite his neighbour on the cheek at pleasure? But, worse still, could this Scripture be quoted to condemn him who should overture in regular course for the amendment of such a law, or for its removal from the statute-book?—Nay, could it be justly quoted—where a contrary law of protection was not yet enacted—to condemn the man who takes upon him in such case to be a law to himself?—and who, offering quiet terms first,—appealing to the reason and good manners of the vagabond (if that be not a contradiction in terms)—should at length, with or without help, moral suasion having failed,—no redress within cry,—overpower, bind, maim if needful, the assailant who makes his coarse advances to either cheek in such fashion?

The argument is ludicrous; but I am serious. The passage *has* a meaning. It is a divine precept, and we are bound to obey it. We only remove the false interpretation. It determines our duty of non-retaliation. Though it does not prohibit resistance, it prescribes the spirit in which resistance is to be made. In short, it says, Avenge not yourselves, or let self-vindication be in all possible meekness. But the law of self-preservation, or protection of the innocent, is prior to the law of clemency to the

guilty, and it were to invest crime with impunity, and establish iniquity by law, if this natural right were precluded. So, transferring the argument to the other passages of Scripture, we say, Admitted that the servant is to obey the "froward master:" Admitted that they who are "under the yoke are to count their own masters worthy of all honour"—query, Does this justify the yoke? Does it sanctify the frowardness? Does it interdict the oppressed from calling the oppressor to reckoning? Does it forbid the servant to ask, Who is my master? and How? Either, of course, by his consent or by force he has been made subordinate: either with contract or without it. If, as in the case of the slave, it is without contract, the law of force or the fact of possession being the only ground of right; how can the right be denied to the oppressed party,—should *he* be able to overpower his master,—not only to stand free from his exactions, but to impose the yoke in turn upon the exactor, and claim service by the same law?

Contract or none! If none, the argument of mere power in possession which justified the master of yesterday serves to justify the master of to-day. Strange that it should not be seen that this doctrine, or rather misinterpretation of the doctrine, of abiding in the same calling wherein you are called, so often read out as his lesson to the slave, may with equal reason be read out as his rule to the master who in the case supposed shall have changed places with him! And thus the doctrine of passive obedience becomes in the domestic sphere, as in the public or civil, the very doctrine that not provokes rebellion merely, but sanctifies it. "Obey your master:" to be sure! So says

the Apostle to the servant; but he leaves the question open to him, *Who is my master?* The precept in no way compromises his right to have his relation defined by the rule of "just and equal;" far less forbids the legislator to interpose a statute based on such a foundation, appealing to the law of nature,—to the principles of righteousness and love. But, especially, who shall say, it precludes the very agitation of such a question; or entitles to brand as disturbers of the peace those who, animated with the sympathies of human beings, and impelled by the felt obligation of Christian principle, quietly associate themselves to invoke redress of intolerable grievance, and to seek by every constitutional mode the establishment of equal laws?

There are many who thus agitate in no spirit of violence. But it is all the same. Unreasoning force is as little tolerant of argument as of arms. To the tyrant, the entrance of the light of truth is as hateful, and more feared than the brandishing of the sword, or the flash of the gunpowder. The men who seek to serve their cause by such a reading of the Bible as coincides with their selfish interests care little for your hermeneutics; but it is all important that the public teacher should know how to save the sacred page from being a shelter to the extortioner.* Is it not plain that the master and the servant are enjoined to mutual fidelity: nay, that the very direction to the inferior to render the obedience with good will implies the duty of rendering the yoke reasonable? The general rules for the relations of life are enumerated in few words. It is left to define them by the natural law which they presuppose.

* See Appendix B.

The first argument, then, we offer against such false interpretation of Scripture is taken from the absurd logical consequences which it forces us on. But our main argument is one which is applicable, as we have already seen, to the constitution of civil government, and which affects alike the interpretation of the New Testament precepts in every department of relative duty. It is this, that these precepts, by the very universal terms in which they are expressed, presuppose principles of limitation by which they are to be defined. The monstrous results which would follow, were they carried out in practice with disregard of any limit, evince this clearly. In each relation, the obedience is to be "in everything," or "in all things." This is the rule for the wife; this is the rule for the child; for the servant; for the subject too; since resistance to rulers is forbidden in terms as unqualified as are those words "all" and "everything" in the other commands. May it not at once be seen that a literal unrestricted interpretation would conflict with our direct duty to God? Who does not see that, though it is not expressed, no sinful act or work can be justified by these sweeping commands to obey earthly superiors? Indeed we may scarcely say the limit is not expressed, since the obedience is required to be "in the Lord." And if that prescribes a limit in one relation, it is evident it is to be applied to all. But it will be found, on any fair construction of its import, to imply more than simply that the inferior may decline a sinful command. It implies also that each relationship shall be so constituted, as well as regulated, in harmony with the laws both of nature and

of revelation, that the temptations to an abuse of authority shall be as much as possible precluded, and the right to obey the higher law of Christ recognised and provided for. In other words, Christianity, and the law of Nature which Christianity presupposes, are concerned with the defining of mutual rights and obligations. The "all things" and the "everything" are to be understood not only in consistency with the duty of preferring the divine will to the human, in any competition of the one with the other: but, besides this limit to the abuse of power, in earthly relations, the law of God claims acknowledgment in the forming of these relationships themselves. Not only does the injunction to obey in all things suppose, where this qualification is not expressed, that the things are lawful; but, also, the command supposes that the relationship is lawful, of which the correlative duties of authority and obedience are ruled for.

Let us illustrate by example. The commands, to wives, and children and servants, would from the first be read by the wives of polygamists as well as by others in the subject conjugal relation; would be read also alike by illegitimate children and legitimate; and by slaves in common with free servants. We may no more allege that any one of these classes was exempted from the application of those precepts than any other. But, then, alike in all, we deny that there is any scriptural sanction implied of the relationship itself where illegitimately contracted. No one surely will argue that the term "wives," when read in the harem of the oriental polygamist was to be interpreted as any further addressed to such parties, or any further recog-

nising their duty of subjection to their (reputed) husbands, than as, or so long as, either by mutual consent, or by a power which the weaker party could not resist, they stood practically related in the conjugal tie. The precept, though, so to speak, accidentally ruling for the duty of the (so called) wife, was really not directly designed for parties thus circumstanced. It is so also with the case of the bastard child, and so with the case of the servant in a forced position, and absolutely in the power of a superior's will. The law enjoining subjection to masters no doubt would rule the duty of the slave, while providentially in such dependent position, but without the law approving that position.

The effect of missing this distinction may be seen in the arguments of apologists for the slave system. It is remarkably apparent in Dr. Spring's work,—“Obligations of the World to the Bible.” Anxiously deprecating the agitation of the question by the Abolitionists, he asserts that the Bible is no agitator, (an assertion very equivocal at the best!), but seeks in the domestic relation as in others the remedy of existing disorders by the gradual quiet influence of the spirit it diffuses. Before this “the yoke of bondage will melt away,” he says; yet as if unwilling to call slavery itself “a yoke,” he says again, “All its abuses will cease, and every form of human oppression will be unknown.” This writer must be understood of the system of slavery, in distinction from service; for, certainly, the relation of master and servant will not cease. Is then, we ask, that which Christianity is to abolish, the thing recognised by the Christian law in a permanent code of ethics?

Can this, which is to perish before the gospel, be really the thing legislated for in passages dealing with undoubtedly moral and permanent relations, such as the conjugal and parental? The relationships of husband and wife, and of parent and child, are not to perish before the gospel, though certainly *they* have their abuses as well as the relationship of master and servant. If in each of these, it is the relationship in distinction from the abuse that is alone recognised by the Christian law: then, surely it is not slavery in distinction from its abuse that is recognised or sanctioned, but the relationship of master and servant of which slavery is itself the "abuse." For, separate from *it* what are called its abuses, and the thing no longer exists. But the relationship of master and servant, recognised beside those other permanent relationships, remains: just as in those other departments of social life, it is not polygamy, not concubinage, not bastardy, that remains, but the divinely constituted relations, of which these are the perversion. The fallacy in this apologetic defence of an iniquitous oppression is plain: what in one sentence is called an abuse is all but held in another sentence to be the thing itself; and an artificial, violent, mode of a relationship, which has already ceased in most countries, is still supposed to remain enshrined in the sacred code, beside relationships perpetual in their nature and common to all ages and countries alike.

It is to the honour of the translators of the authorised version of the Bible—though living in a time when civil liberty was less understood than now, that they have uniformly rendered the original Hebrew and Greek word

which denotes both slave and servant by the latter word only. Without exception, in our New Testament, this is their translation of δούλος; and why is this? Not only did philology permit but correct logical principles of interpretation required it of them. They justly apprehended that the more comprehensive term alone fitted a code of ethics intended to regulate the relations of life through all time. They knew that many servants were bondmen: they knew, however, that many servants also were freemen, and that, at the least, these surely were comprehended in the design of the precept. And they rightly preferred the generic word which covered service of all kinds, and would remain to describe it when the violent and artificial relation which is its abuse should have disappeared from the earth. Slavery, so far as it was meanwhile the unavoidable lot of many, was no doubt thus ruled for as service; but if slavery alone were to be regarded as in the contemplation of the sacred command, it would follow that those in the more honourable relation of service by contract would be without a rule to guide them, after slavery should have ceased, (as happily, it may be added, it has ceased).

III. We would, so far as time allows, address ourselves to the solution of the *third* question. There, either the silence of the New Testament is alleged against States concerning themselves with any care of religion; or, precepts and directions to the Christian community are interpreted so as to forbid to the civil government, under any change of circumstances, responsibilities which Christian societies were in the primitive times expected, unaided, to take on

themselves. There is no denying that Christian missionaries in their earliest labours demanded nothing of the Gentiles. They who were taught were expected to communicate with him that taught in all good things. The question would be, where a national community is accepting the teaching, Is it forbidden, in its provisional arrangements for a public or common benefit at the hand of the gospel of Christ, to extend, more than protection, positive favour to its ministers? or, Does *he* the less live of the altar or of the gospel whom the general community or the State acknowledges as ministering to it that gospel?

Here the opportunity occurs to assert a principle of Biblical exegesis too much, we think, overlooked by theologians, and applicable to many questions of social duty and of Christian economics. It is, that as the Old Testament incorporates the law of nature, embodying many of its moral and permanent principles in the judicial law of Israel, Christian States may not ignore these; which, instead of being superseded or virtually repealed by the silence of the New Testament, we should accept as supplemental to this later code of ethics. The fact appears to be, that the New Testament in effect recognises and proceeds upon those principles: and no otherwise can we affix a consistent or rational meaning to some of the precepts of the later law. We have not in the New Testament any direct or formal repetition of the Decalogue. It is, rather, indirectly and occasionally referred to in removing the false glosses and misinterpretations by which either table of the moral law had been defaced. Unless, for example, we assume the permanent obligation of the fourth com-

mandment, we should certainly be at a loss to vindicate the authority for a New Testament Sabbath. We are obliged also to recur to the Old Testament in defining the lawful or forbidden degrees of affinity in the marriage contract. The New Testament, occupied as it is with the motives and principles of individual action, and, next to these, with the internal arrangements of the Christian Church, does not treat, except in the most general or indirect terms, of social national polity. But it does not supersede either the family or the civil relation, with the duties and responsibilities which these involve. Christianity had not yet secured the subjection of States. It does not rule for the correlative obligations of magistrates and subjects specifically or in detail. It recognises the moral law as known,—leaving it to men's reason to mould their own constitutions according to it. Divinely approved precedents were at hand, and on record,—suggestive of social as well as individual obligation; and if in Hebrew law there are embodied some extraordinary rules of policy which may appear out of harmony with the eternal law of right—such as the laws of divorce, or of servitude,—are there not sufficient correctives and modifications of these in the Hebrew code itself, to enable us to subject them, as peculiar and temporary, to that moral law which was from the beginning?

Hence, it is, we judge, unfair treatment of the sacred writers, and not consistent with the admitted principles that scripture must be supposed harmonious with itself, and that all scripture is our rule, to set the instructions addressed to Churches against the duty of States; or to interpret the rule for the spirit of the individual man, with-

cut regard to the relation he sustains to civil as well as domestic organisations, and the enlargement or restraint of individual privilege which these organisations imply. It is, we repeat, with the motives and principles of action the New Testament is mainly occupied: not with the defining of social relations or constitutions; yet neither as disallowing the law of nature, nor the embodiment of it in the law of nations. See what would follow from taking certain precepts of the New Testament by themselves, regardless of those presupposed dictates of a prior law. We have already met with one illustration, in the instance of the precept, "Resist not evil." But, see another in our Saviour's injunction of humility, and, as it might seem, equality—"All ye are brethren. He that is greatest, let him be as the least." Did He, by this, discountenance gradation of ranks, or the essential subordinations whether of sacred or civil society? So far from it, while asserting of Himself as our exemplar, "I am among you as he that serveth," He yet, in almost the same breath, claims His rightful mastery—"Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say right." It is not the abolishing of human authority He intends; it is the regulation of the spirit in which any superiority is to be used. So; take the Apostle's most Christian-like warning against one member of the Corinthian Church going to law with another in heathen courts, instead of resorting to brotherly arbitration within the spiritual society itself. Does this absolutely prohibit appeals to civil tribunals, where these civil tribunals, as in Christian states, are based on Scriptural law? It is manifest, in such case, that the reason of the Apostle's

monition would no longer apply, at least to the same extent, as where the Christian code was yet unacknowledged by the State, and reproach might be brought on the Christian cause by invoking the decision of strangers and enemies. Not that these apostolic counsels cease to apply, nor Christ's own precept, "Resist not evil." They apply to govern our spirit and motives—to repress a contentious disposition, and to prescribe, where a choice is in our power, the most peaceful adjustment of strifes; but not to the absolute repudiating of God's ordinance of magistracy, or forbidding to the Christian the use of his citizen rights.

A like principle of interpretation should surely guide on the large question of the duty of States to the Church of Christ, or the still larger question of the modification which any code of national law should receive from the light—where enjoyed—of divine revelation. That Christ's kingdom is not of this world, is a grand truth, indicating the contrast between the spirit of the world and the spirit that is of God, and prescribing a higher end and rule of action to Christians, whether individually or socially, than is prompted by the selfishness and ambition of earthly men. But the words of the Divine Teacher are misapplied, when interpreted to forbid the recognition of one ordinance of heaven by another, or the co-operation with His gospel and its spiritual agencies of a civil authority that is not to be confounded with "the world" in the sense in which Christians are not "of the world," or in which its friendship is "enmity with God." It—civil authority—is, rather, a restraint on worldly passion; "ordained" of God for this end,—an ordinance under whose shelter the

Church should find, as it is encouraged to pray God it may find, protection and encouragement in all godliness as well as honesty. Christians, though required to eschew conformity to the evil world, are not required to go out of the world; and the spiritual kingdom of Christ seems no more forbidden to co-operate with what in secular constitutions is *of God*, than the individual Christian is forbidden to mingle with his fellow-citizens for common ends. Nay, if the individual, even for spiritual ends themselves, may seek association with the world, or accept positions in the secular community—influential on its good—why may not Christians in a corporate capacity hold association with a Christian State for the highest and holiest ends? Or why, in other words, may not States themselves become a department of His kingdom, to whom it is said it belongs that all “people, nations, and languages, should serve him?” Why may not the Church, as the more spiritual kingdom of the Saviour, while by its own proper appliances profiting the State, claim or accept in return the favour of laws which the gospel diffused by it has served to purify and refine?

We hold, of course, that the terms of such association and co-operation require careful definition; its form or extent may be qualified by the various circumstances of civil communities, and by the state of the spiritual society itself, as that may be more united or divided. But; that the spiritual and secular departments of society are equally under law to Him who is both Head of the church, and King of nations, surely yields the corollary that they should regard themselves as standing on no antagonistic terms; that each, instead of professing neutrality or indif-

ference, should take positive interest in the objects of the other. Surely it must sound strange that a State favoured with Christian light is not collectively to recognise that standard of duty which is the only safe guide of individuals: or, that in those capacities in which men may be most influential for promoting the cause of divine truth, they are to ignore it; refraining from the employment of any power or authority in the service of Christ more than the service of Baal; or, by an imaginary impartiality, looking alike favourably on Christian, Turk, and Pagan. We say imaginary impartiality; for where Christianity or the Bible is not recognised as the rule of social action, what rule shall come instead? A certain arbitrary and undefinable expediency, which, professing to protect opposite faiths, may in effect persecute the true; or may place the State itself at the mercy of an ambitious Priesthood, to the over-riding of natural rights by pretended spiritual claims. The separation of religion from politics is a plausible cry; but a non-recognition of God and His law in the civil framework of any community leaves men to be governed by an uncertain, conventional, it may be a tyrannical, will. Has not this been the secret of the perpetration of grievances such as we have referred to under a former head? Churches too easily acquitted themselves of the duty of pleading for the oppressed, by the pretence that the law defined social rights. States, again, taught by ecclesiastics to leave the domain of conscience untouched, alas, at last left that domain unprotected because undefined! The poor bondman might well despair of justice where the rights of conscience were not known to the State, and not cared for by

the Church, as being bound up with alleged proprietary rights, in the artificial arrangements of the commonwealth. The oppressed is driven from Caiaphas to Pilate, and from Pilate to Caiaphas, as He, the great Redeemer, was. And need we lack illustration from the latest history of the British and French empires (though our beloved country, thank God ! still holds Scripture as the basis of its laws) of the danger of ignoring Christian ends, or a decided Christian policy, in the business of education and government ?

“Education is a nation’s cheapest defence,”* is a maxim especially true of religious education. The latest Continental overturnings are too obvious, in the lessons they furnish, to require our dilating upon them. The but little less recent experiences in Hindostan serve to shew what small result to the amelioration of society comes of school systems in which Christianity is ignored ; and how naturally Deism itself is engendered of the Gallio-like spirit, whether in rule or in culture.

* Burke.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

OBITUARY, OR MONUMENTAL PART OF DISCOURSE XVIII.

THE subject, you will perceive, has been chosen not without reference to the decease of one long known and revered among us, and to the value of whose services it affords me pleasure to bear my hearty testimony. Of Dr. Burns' many labours in this land of his adoption, I need the less speak, as I should have to repeat, probably, much that has been said by your pastor in the morning.* It may be more appropriate, that having had the opportunity of knowing the venerable departed longer than most about me here, and of observing his labours in what is called among us the old country, I should bear chiefly on these, not omitting his most recent services in our theological College. My attention was drawn to our deceased

* The pastor of the church in which the family of the deceased sat had conducted the morning service: an arrangement the more fitting, as the deceased himself had latterly ministered on many occasions in the pulpit of the same church (Gould Street). Indeed, during not a few months of the vacancy in that charge occasioned by the return to Scotland of the former minister, my reverend and learned friend, Professor Taylor, Dr. Burns had largely taken on himself the responsibility of the pastorate; a generosity which the congregation, when again provided with a minister, honourably showed itself capable of appreciating.

friend in the comparative youth of my own ministry, and towards the mid-time of his, as one taking a very prominent part in the cause of evangelical religion, and watchfully guarding the rights and interests of the Christian people, at a time when this required no small vigilance and resolution. Men may acquire on very cheap terms, the reputation of friends of the evangelical interest, when the tide has come to turn in its favour; but it is due to Dr. Burns to say that he stood against the current when that ran in the contrary way. It is known that a blight had extensively come over churches in Scotland, England, and Ireland, half, or say, three-quarters of a century ago; and in the church of Scotland a full exhibition of the truth was, if I may not say the exception rather than the rule, at any rate far less general than happily it came to be in more recent years. Our deceased father and brother took no unimportant share in the work of revival, and reassertion of the true principles of our Scottish Presbyterianism:—and, when I say Presbyterianism, I do not merely think of Church government, but of the catechetical and confessional doctrines of our loved native land. I know that in the sphere of his immediate pastorate (in Paisley), his influence was powerfully felt in the very earliest years of his ministry. I remember,—on occasion, I think it was, of my first revisiting Scotland, after my coming to this country—that in a conversation held with me by a worthy minister, now also deceased, who either was of Paisley as his native town, or during his student life had been familiar with that locality, he said that the exertions of Dr. Burns there, in his youth and vigour, told with most observable effect on the community. Not that that Scottish town was without faithful spiritual labourers both in other denominations and in his own; but, in his immediate pastoral sphere, and around, a far livelier interest came to be evinced in religious observances, appliances adapted to the young and to the masses of the population were multiplied, and beyond his more denominational range (so I understood my reverend informer) the example of his energy and public spirit provoked to a praiseworthy emulation.

But I look at our departed friend not as the pastor only, but in his more public and standing out attitude, as a member of church courts, and of the general community, by his pen as well as his voice pleading for the right : and I cannot but regard him as having been, for no few years, one of the bulwarks of Scottish evangelism and public morality.

His mind naturally addicted to historic investigation, and his principles disposing him to venerate the memory of our Scottish martyrs, we find him appropriately employed in editing the works of Wodrow, and, by various contributions from his pen through influential organs of public opinion, seeking to extend the knowledge, and revive the influence of the early Scottish confessors.

I recognise the same disposition in his care of the memory of one who was more his own contemporary, the late Dr. Stevenson McGill, of Glasgow University, one whom I also shall ever venerate, having had the privilege for more than one season of waiting on his prelections as a theological professor ; and whom Dr. Burns highly estimated as having given large impulse to the cause of ecclesiastical revival, in the west of Scotland especially.

Nor was it in the ecclesiastical field only that the influence of the father we this day mourn was exerted and felt.

I honour much and know well his labours in more than one department of philanthropy, beyond the range of direct pastoral work, though not alien from it. It was given to him beyond many to see the defects of the Scottish poor law, defects which were indeed recognised, so far, by assemblies after assemblies of the Church ; the provision for the poor being acknowledged to be in a great measure *illusory* in numerous parishes of Scotland. But the real remedy was tardily applied. Our departed friend contended for the establishing of a legal provision more adapted to the changed circumstances of Scotland, and for a very considerable modification of what was tenaciously cherished by some as the Scottish system, though perhaps rather to be called the mis-application to an altered state

of society of an ancient scheme, which Knox and our early ecclesiastics acquiesced in, as a necessity of their times, rather than approved.

The State has rightly, with the general consent of the Scottish mind, revolutionised its scheme of providing for the poor. No legislation in such an interest can meet every difficulty, and abuses must be watched against. But the principles of the new arrangement, I verily believe, are in far more harmony with a right jurisprudence, and with the laws of the Bible, than what prevailed for a century before. Dr. Burns in pressing his views on the public,—views which I cordially supported along with him,—had to oppose the specious pleadings of men of no small name, who set off with much eloquence views honourable enough to their warmth of heart, but neither resting on a solid philosophy, nor sustained by legitimate reasonings from the word of God. It is too large a subject to discuss in a Pulpit discourse; but the principle contended for by our departed friend is, mainly, that a direct responsibility lies on the body politic for the care of its destitute members; a responsibility which it may not wisely nor righteously devolve on sectional churches, or ecclesiastical functionaries. These last, of course, have a duty, and a very sacred one, incumbent on them as concerns the oversight of the poor, especially the poor members of the Church—though we cannot admit that the State may ignore the direct claim even of these as citizens. But a safe as well as a just policy requires that so great an interest as the common pauperism of a realm be not left to the hap-hazard inspection of officials whose time and opportunity for adequate attention to it is uncertain: nor is it just to churches to assume—as was too long assumed—their sufficiency to provide the means of alimentering a nation's poor.

Hence, in what is now called the old system, the admitted and oft lamented inefficiency of the Scottish provision, necessitating, for eking it out, mendicancy with all its demoralising effects; and, more serious still perhaps, the withdrawalment from their proper spiritual vocation of religious functionaries—an

evil this latter seen and regretted by none more than earnest opponents of the change which became necessary; though they strangely failed to see that the cause of the evil was inherent in the principle of the system they were so eager to uphold.

I do not forget that, in upholding it, they counted on a larger provision of religious appliances: and, who can deny that these in good working will diminish the pauperism of a country, by diffusing moral and industrious habits?—But; besides all that is uncertain and contingent in the assumed harmonious action of sects—we may not assume that spiritual officials can be created at pleasure; nor that the vicissitudes of a country may not involve even virtuous citizens in distress on a scale far outrunning optional efforts to meet the exigency; nor, finally, that it is for the interests of religion itself that the invidious task of deciding on the poor citizen's claim for bread—even the claim of the irreligious citizen—should be left in the hands of the ministers and representatives of a gospel of charity and peace.

Besides the larger writings of Dr. Burns on this important question, a small synopsis of his argument, in a mere fly-leaf, came some time ago into my hands—I may have seen it before, but had forgotten it—of which I said to him, that no abler piece of reasoning ever came from his pen.*

* It is an amazing proof how far an amiable enthusiasm may overpower an able man's logic, when such an argument as the following could satisfy the mind of Dr. Chalmers. In referring to our Lord's words, "give to every one that asketh thee," he seriously seeks support in this word "ask" for his argument against an extended civil provision for the poor, and for the allowance of a system of beggary to eke out the uncertain ecclesiastical and parochial scheme he pleads for—the allowance of it at least in preference to the introducing of a regular anticipative provision—that it is a sort of "religious wrong to extinguish that condition on which Christ hath made the duty of giving to depend." Surely the eloquent philanthropist might have seen that, besides that no system has proposed to extinguish *asking*, yea, on the highway, in cases of sudden occurrence, or exceptional urgency; the theory he was so opposed to, whether as existing in England, (it is the principle of the system, not its abuses, we are looking to), or as proposed for Scotland, and now in substance largely adopted there, presupposes "asking," in some form, or application for relief. The question is as to the mode of *asking*; and surely humanity, as well as decency, is better protected by an anticipative provision, with a certain and responsible agency

On one other great question of philanthropy I have also pleasure in paying a just tribute to our departed friend's discernment as well as humanity. He laboured for the abolition of slavery in British possessions and America. He saw, what many were slow to see, that that form of oppression was no mere abuse of the domestic relation of master and servant, as not a few vainly argued, but involved a claim, in itself wrong,

which could not be distinguished from imposture, though also of promptly meeting as obtained necessity; than by a system exposing the sensibility of virtuous poor to the shock of rude repulses, or the humiliating necessity of being oppressor by; and no less exposing the giver to being every thing less than by the clamorous appeals of the thriftless and idle. Dr. Burns goes so far as to say he would have society to feed the idler, even to the extreme of the coarsest vagrancy, rather than to pay a poor rate on a comprehensive scale.

(See his Works, or vol. ii. of his Political Economy.)
 It is not the argument from our Saviour's miracles, which so much recommended itself to the learned divine as in favour of his views on pauperism, that is to be taken as equally fallacious. That our Lord did perform miracles, is not in question; but in performing miracles to supersede men doing good, is not in question. His power to do for themselves, is beyond question. Nor is it true that our Saviour would so encourage idleness! But it is no proof that he would have disapproved of a regular anticipative provision for the poor, including able-bodied but unemployed persons, as well as the infirm, by reason of the vicissitudes of the labour market, and affecting a claim on society as that of the indigent. When it is reasoned that the frequent ministrations of our Lord to the masses brought before Him, make a remarkable contrast with the few miracles wrought to feed the hungry—we shall find that our Lord *He did* on two or three occasions feed his followers with bread. It is not forgotten that even in the department of bodily distress, Christ did not supersede the physician's part. His power was put forward to deal with diseases beyond the reach of the healing art. His object, of course, was to manifest his superhuman power.

Besides other powerful argumentation, Dr. Burns never reasoned more convincingly than when he took off the objection to a poor rate, that a rate of taxation more resembling that of England than what so long prevailed in Scotland, tends to shut up the sources of private benevolence.

He justly held that, when the State has first done its incumbent part, in providing for the extreme destitution, by what may necessarily be termed the first necessities, or on the limited scale essential to the bare maintenance of life; in other words by work or bread for the unwilling, and relief for the vagrant; *then*, individual spontaneous benevolence, and statistical, find their appropriate field, in supplementing the relief, especially of the industrious and religious poor; and this supplementary part they may be expected to do the more cordially, when called to deal with a more defined object, than when the offering of

to an absolute and in effect irresponsible power, unsafe for any superior to wield, and incompatible, in the inferior, with inviolable rights of humanity and of conscience. In my common views with him on this subject lay one bond of our fellowship. We encountered cold looks from men of whom we had a right to expect better things: and, not seldom, we were told that we were insisting on more than the Bible required. We knew and felt it to be otherwise. We saw the puerility of the dis-

the Church or individual was cast indiscriminately into the black gulf of a national destitution: for, notorious it was that the Church and church-going persons, were exorbitantly aided by only occasional help doled out by reluctant heritors—to bear the burden of parochial relief, to the exempting from their adequate proportion of it of abler citizens, protected by their distance from the Sabbath sanctuary, or their sojourn, in gratification of their tastes, in other lands: A system at variance with equity, imposing chiefly on the middle and lower classes a responsibility for a great public duty which in reason should be shared by all—reversing the order of nature in making that supplementary which should be prior and radical; that is to say, making contingent on a deficiency in the freewill offerings of the collections of a portion of the community, such an authoritative impost as could at best reach all impartially—the neglecter of the Sabbath as well as the observer of its decencies, the churl as well as the liberal, and him who call fair, of course might be spending his means far away from the districts or cry of the families, it may be, of those who built up with the tails of their strength his fortunes, or defended in the field his inheritance—system, but, which confused spiritual and secular functions, turning deacons, elders, pastors, into magistrates—for the occasion—or ministers of police.

We did also fully endorse what our deceased friend said in reply to this oft repeated objection to an authoritative poor rate, of it being, "to stir up the bowels of private compassion; that never had he found prompt compliance with his calls in behalf of special distress, than when, in his visits to Scotland, he accosted the frank and open-hearted Englishman, who rarely dreamed of alleging as an excuse for shutting his pocket, but an urgent appeal to his charity, that he was already held liable by law, to do his part in relief of the general poor.

It would lengthen unduly this note to meet objections which may be found to the present and present workings of the Scottish law. The equitable principle once recognised, we fear not for its results, under the application of such checks and guards as experience will suggest to our legislators. Already in England, many of the faults long charged on a system which pressed so disproportionately on the residents in certain localities are yielding before the application of the principle of parochial unions—a principle which only needs, we suppose, to be extended to the whole national territory and family whether in England or Scotland:—The principle prevails all over Ireland, in the form of unions of electoral divisions.

inction attempted to be made between slavery *per se* (as it was phrased) and slavery in its abuses. We saw that these abuses were not accidents of the system, but its essence; and we denied that any exceptional dispensation of the Almighty, allowing to a certain people a certain interference with the natural liberties of others, any more authorises communities of men, without like warrant, to tamper at will with the liberties of other men, than the precedent of the extermination of the Canaanites warrants to nations a tampering with lives, or wanton invasion of territory. Providence, finally,—the event—has brought suffrages enow to our side, which would have been more gracefully tendered to the truth itself. At bloody cost the principles of natural and Christian law have been vindicated. Thanks to God, it is now alike true of American as of British territory, slavery cannot breathe on it! But, grave responsibility for the long existence of the evil, and for the costly means of its extinction, rests with those who, by their erroneous theories of interpretation, connected the cause of the blessed Gospel with an usurpation and oppression to which its whole spirit is opposed. I congratulate myself, and, were our deceased friend within hearing of my voice, would have congratulated him on the triumph of our principles.

It only remains that I should refer to the services rendered by my venerable colleague to the Theological seminary. He is well known to have taken a deep interest in that institution from its commencement. And, the direct professorial work which he performed has extended over a considerable number of years. It was gratifying to me to know him to have expressed, that one element in his satisfaction in accepting the appointment was, that he would be associated in labour with one (meaning myself) with whose theological sentiments he generally agreed. During his very latest years, though nominally on the honoured *emeritus* list, he yet was liberal in his exertions, and constant in his solicitude for the good of Knox' College. When he prelected less, he conversed as often or more. If we had his autumnal decay, we had also his autumnal

ripeness, and the benefit of his large experience. His affectionate interest in studious youth secured to them at all times ready access to his counsels ; and I have no doubt his memory is affectionately cherished by students as well as by his colleagues. We shall miss his well-known form, and well-remembered voice, within the walls where he loved to linger, and within which he died. May the spirit of Elijah rest on many of our young Elishas, in the influence of his example of zeal, and laboriousness, and prayerfulness withal ! Like other men he had his imperfections ; but his excellences stood out prominent, commanding respect and engaging esteem. Those who differed from him, and contended with him, loved the man. It was not his least praise that, by affectionate blandness of manner united to remarkable powers of conversation, he made himself an ever welcome guest in the humblest Christian abode : while he knew and respected those conventional courtesies of refined society, by attention to which he could command the respect of the highest class ; and, of which it is a very grave mistake in teachers of religion to suppose the neglect is not injurious to the sacred cause they represent. It may be allowed that a certain impulsiveness of nature led now and again to unduly hasty judgments on men and things : but at the worst, this had a redeeming quality beside it, a more than usual frankness in owning a mistake. And I can testify to another kindred disposition being conspicuous, one of the best tests of a superior mind, that, on questions affecting the public interests, he was ready to receive light from whatever quarter ; but especially on matters strictly professional, I have known few who welcomed more cordially the unrestrained interchange of thought with friends or colleagues. I could submit to him a criticism on his views, or proffer a suggestion as to manner and method on any of his spoken or written lucubrations, far more sure of candid consideration, than in dealing with lesser men.

Father—patriarch—I might say,—of Canadas' Presbyterian Church, rest in thy bed ! We know Who said, "he is not dead

but sleepeth ;" Sleep on a while ; thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days. Mourning relatives may find joy in the thought, that the first morning that has shone on the turf beneath which the departed lies is that of the day of the Son of man—of His rising in triumph from the grave, and shedding so blessed a light on its darkness !

Death, take your part : king of terrors, do your worst. We know the limits of your power. It is not much you can do : it is not long. Each returning Sabbath assures us of the completion, in His people, of the triumph over the grave the Saviour has won in His own person. How consoling the thought : even they who shall never know death, being found alive at Christ's coming, but who shall, in the twinkling of an eye, be changed at the sounding of the last trumpet, even they shall not prevent them who are asleep ! "The dead in Christ shall rise *first* : " not separate, but together, shall they ascend to meet their Lord, and enter with like joy on their common inheritance.

APPENDIX B.

A FRAGMENT OF CRITICISM ON THE WORD "SERVANT."

(BEING A DEFENCE OF OUR AUTHORIZED VERSION.*)

At this late hour of the day in the history of civil and ecclesiastical liberty, I have wondered to see how many of our exegetical writers have given the word "slave" as the translation of the Greek δούλος. I was not surprised at upholders of the slave system in Charleston and New Orleans so seeking shelter for a system of which they were too tolerant in practice, but it is grieving to see how Alford, Conybeare, and others, have given the benefit of their critical authority to this revolting amendment; never I trust to be adopted in our authorised version.

Dr. Hodge—though not a defender of slavery—seems not altogether to have shaken off educational prejudices, and he too supports the slavish rendering, by a reference to the etymology of the word. He surely needs not to be told that etymology is a most uncertain guide in such a question. It is just as possible to reconcile with the verb δέω (ligo) bonds of

* So far from disapproving of a revision of our English Bible, the writer in a public lecture sought to allay prejudices on this subject: but was not not without some apprehension, when he learned—being then in America—the constitution of the Committee or Association undertaking the work, men of so undoubted qualification generally—lest the extraordinary translation of δούλος, proffered years ago, in several published exegetical works by members of the Committee, and especially by one who recently closed his earthly labours, should unhappily be transferred into an improved version. The "Fragment" gives in substance the views he has thought it his duty to bring under the attention of some of those engaged in this very responsible work.

contract as slavery proper. The word "allotment" (say), in disposing of offices, or rewards, should in vain be argued from, now, to prove that the "lot," on this or that occasion, was employed.

I respectfully, but very confidently, submit my grounds of preference for the translation given in our received version, and given uniformly: For, not even once, is the word "slave" found in the English New Testament (scarcely in the Old, indeed, though "bondman" occurs as the translation of *aved* in distinction from *sakir*, Gen. xlv. 9, 10; Lev. xxv. 40; and "slave" (italics) for a homeborn, Jer. ii. 14), except as the translation of an entirely different word from δούλος—"bodies" of men (Rev. xviii. 13).

I have often thought it creditable to the logic as well as philology of those learned men of King James' time, that, though less appreciating than we do now, the principles of civil and religious liberty, or, in spite of any bias we might have presumed upon as likely to incline them to choose the alternative sense of δούλος, which no one can deny the word covers, these revisers of the older existing versions so decidedly preferred the rendering, which, we believe with them, was chiefly designed by the Spirit of inspiration. They retained the word "servant" as it stood in the Bishop's, and Geneva translations—in Coverdales also, and in Wycliffe's.

I feel assured that the more recent exegetical writers I have referred to would admit that those directions in Eph. vi. and Col. iii., though including a rule for slaves (as well as free servants)—being in that condition, either by force, or with content esteeming it their unavoidable lot,—the injunctions so laid on them do not imply the sanction of the unnatural and often wretched relationship itself, any more than the injunctions to "wives," which might be read by those in a state of polygamy, sanctioned that perversion of the marriage ordinance; or any more than Nero's or Caligula's principles of government are sanctioned by the general injunctions of obedience to the powers that be.

Then, my first presumptive argument in favour of "servant," not "slave," is, that in a table of relative duties, or code of social morality, in which all the other relations ruled for are of a kind essential to society through all time, the interpretation is to be preferred which is and will be applicable to the relation more immediately in question through all ages, and under all varying conditions of social life: nay, which is applicable, beyond the domestic sphere, to subordinates rendering service in public stations the most remote from slavish or base. Xenophon calls satraps by the name *δοῦλος*. It is remembered how often our great Wellington styled himself Her Majesty's servant, or that of the government.

In a code, then, regulating the duty of all under the authority of others, and responsible to others as in some sort their masters, the more comprehensive term should surely be chosen, if the original word will bear it; or, rather, the original word must have been used in its widest sense, if the rule was intended for universal application.

It is more reasonable, surely, that the violent and unnatural relationship, only tolerated, so to speak, by the Divine law, should be merged (under the one comprehensive term) in the one more accordant with the law of nature, than that the legitimate duties of free servants, or stewards, should be merged in the obligations of forced and degraded service, and only left to be inferred from these.

In other words, the duty of the slave as such is no doubt included, so far as in the then existing state of society he was the servant and trusted subordinate of a master; but the generic name of "servant" alone adapts to the design of the precept as intended to govern free as well as bond, and to remain a law when slavery proper should have ceased.

The strange consequence, too, of preferring "slave" as the translation of *δοῦλος* is, that angels, apostles, and saints shall be held to have been spoken of under the base name so utterly out of keeping with every right view of the relation to God or to Christ sustained whether by those early heralds of the

Gospel, or by Christians in common as the children of God, and privileged to live and "serve" in the spirit of the adoption.

It seems, after all, as if those who, like Alford, proffer the rendering I object to, scarcely feel as if they could carry it out. Like Dr. McKnight long ago, in his translation and paraphrase, who though he gives the word in question, in its occurrence in Eph. vi., the meaning of bond-servant, admits, when he comes to Col. iii., that our translators have justly rendered by the word servant, they (*see Alford or Conybeare*) vary the word. They will scarcely call Paul a slave; but a bondman!

McKnight's reason is, I think, hardly a good one, though I presume these others do agree with him: "What the apostle said to the slave (*I ask, why hold him as speaking to the bond-servant and not to the free?*) was in effect said to the servant." My position is that what was said to servants no doubt was addressed, among others, to slaves; that being so common a style of service in those days. But I submit to every exegetical scholar whether this position is not the more logical:—that what was addressed to servants generally, in this permanent ethical code, included, only so far as the Divine law or providence permitted the violent and unnatural relationship, a rule for the forced domestic as well as the voluntary.

I might refer to such a lexicographer as Schleusner, and to the comprehensive signification which he gives to δούλος. And when we call to mind the rule so well known to every Biblical critic—agreed to by Ernesti and all the rest—that words coming to be used under the new circumstances in which the writers of the New Testament were placed, must of necessity be understood with some modification of meaning from the classic usage; surely, the great principles of natural and Christian law would plead for the comprehensive sense of this word, even if classic use were alien to such comprehension, as it was not altogether by any means. For what word could, in a general code, be employed but δούλος? No other than this was comprehensive enough: not μισθιος, not ἀνδράποδον—by the by,

(as I think Barnes notes) the only occurrence of this word is in a compound or derivative form, and, truly, in a connection which implies a brand on the slave-holding system (2 Tim. i.) Finally, *οἰκετης* also, is too limited: so *διδάκωνος*,*

I suppose a chief argument for rendering by the word "slave" or "bondman," is the contrast in which the word, no doubt, stands with *ἐλευθερος* (freeman), especially in 1 Cor. vii. 1.^c anywhere, I could admit the word bondman there; yet our translators still give "servant" as the corresponding word to *δοῦλος*: and I must contend they are justifiable on principles already argued; though one could suppose the apostle more in that passage than in Eph. vi. or Col. iii., looking at the special case of the literal bondman—I say literal, for even in a free country, the words here standing antithetical to one another could still fitly describe the person on the one hand, who is his own master, as we say; and on the other, the party held to service by contract:—Keeping in view the apostle's main object in this passage: to reconcile men to their various conditions in life; also to remind us that all engagements or limitations of personal freedom are to be qualified by the prior obligation to Christ; and that the present social inequalities bulk little in comparison with the great common privileges and hopes of as many as are Christ's.

Perhaps the solution adopted by Leigh in his "Critica Sacra" will satisfy many. On *δοῦλος*, he says, "Hæc vox tripliciter sumitur in Scripturis; *Primo*, opponitur homini libero, ac significat idem quod mancipium (Gal. iii. 28); *Secundo*, dicitur, generaliter, de omnibus fidelibus (Luke xvii. 10, &c.); *Tertio*, speciatim sic vocantur ministri ecclesiæ.—Apost. P.—passim—in suis epistolis se servum vocat."

* Generally in older Versions translated "minister" in distinction from *δοῦλος* "servant." The Latin version gives "waiter" (Canon Lightfoot *On a Fresh Revision*, p. 71).

APPENDIX C.

SPEECHES IN PRESBYTERY AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY (1845) IN THE CASE OF THE THEN MINISTER OF FREE ST. MARK'S, GLASGOW.

* *Moderator*,—After the long address of our friend, it would be very inexpedient were we, on the part of the presbytery, to make an equal demand on the time of this house; and I entirely acquiesce in the suggestion, that we should make our remarks bear directly on the immediate point at issue, and the question of the reconcilableness of the appellant's views with the Church's acknowledged standards. I shall not, therefore, follow our reverend brother through all the Scripture citations adduced by him in the course of his address; I shall rather classify them under a few heads, by reference to the false principles of interpretation which, as he advanced point by point, evolved themselves one after another; for, of course, it is easy to construct a plausible argument for an unscriptural tenet, by a formidable array of Scripture texts, if we allow its advocate to affix his own arbitrary sense to words or terms, or allow to pass unchallenged definitions which proceed on the assumption of the very thing to be proved. This applies to the appellant's frequent use of such terms as "faith" and "life," and his confident appeal to passages asserting indeed an invariable connection between these two terms, or between the things denoted by them; while on the very face of them it is manifest that they leave the real question undecided which he

* Delivered in General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, May 1845.

agitates; nay, not a few of them decide it, so far as they decide it at all, against our friend's own views—which again can in no way be reconciled with other portions of the word altogether omitted and unacknowledged in his reasonings.

I have noted some of those fallacies of interpretation; I thought they might be comprehended under three heads; but ere the web of my friend was woven, I found they amounted to six,—and here they are:—His exegesis errs, sometimes by defect, sometimes by excess, but most of all by confusion. *First*, he confounds the order of nature with the order of time, when he so resolutely disowns any presence of the quickening Spirit with the soul previous to the act of faith; *second*, he misses the distinction of the habit or grace of faith, and its exercise; *thirdly*, he confounds union to Christ with union; *again*, some passages he applies to this union, or to Christ's entrance into the soul, which apply not to union, but communion,—not to the Spirit's entrance, but to His continued abiding, and further manifestation or evidence; *then* he confounds (in what he says of judicial and moral life) life as in *foro Dei* and in *foro conscientiarum*; and, *last of all*, and most important of all, he confounds, in his interpretations, the process of operation between God and the soul, with the rule of duty for man. This last fallacy especially accounts for his wrong argument founded on Isaiah lv. 3—"Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live." But the whole host of passages which he has quoted,—his misinterpretations of them, I mean,—may be referred to one or other of these categories. Some of the examples will occur as we go on; but, in the meantime, I agree in what the Appellant said, that the main point of difference lies in the question concerning the faculties or capabilities of man as a fallen creature. By referring to page ninth of the printed case, you find him announcing his theory in his own words:—"I believe," he says, "that the absolute inability of sinners to believe the gospel, or do anything spiritually good, is not natural but moral; that is, that it consists not in the want of the powers or faculties necessary for the performance

of duty, but in the entire depravity and aversion of their hearts to God." Then he proceeds (in a second paragraph) to acknowledge, indeed, a certain agency of the Spirit of God as originating faith—a certain Divine influence which he does not define; but to deny that this influence is regenerating or quickening, or of the nature of spiritual life: for in all these forms we have put it, and in all he denies it. We have not insisted on mere words; we allow that "life" or regeneration may describe the full renovation of the man, or the development of grace in ulterior effects; but it is on the question, whether spiritual life at all is necessary to enable to the *act* of faith,—this, as the appellant says, is the point on which the battle must be and has been fought, and on which we join issue again.

Well, to the Scripture supremely the appeal lies; but it is also fit to ask, What say our recognised subordinate standards, which he has subscribed? The house will find the passage, to which the committee has often referred their brother in the tenth chapter, second section, of the Confession of Faith,—“This effectual call is of God’s free and special grace alone; not from anything foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being *quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit*, he is thereby *enabled* to answer the call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.” Now, Sir, this is surely plain enough: there can be no mistake what the deliverance of our Confession is,—what the recognised principle of this Church. So plain is it, that when I find my friend persisting, as in his reasons of dissent he does, in the averment (but I perceive he just avers it, he says no more—not one word of reason is added) that his doctrine is consistent with the Confession of Faith, I am reminded of the man on board ship, who being appointed to clear the deck, and throw the dead overboard, was about to precipitate a living man into the deep: it was a captured ship, and the tar was not particularly ceremonious; and so when the wounded man spoke out and said, “I am not dead,” he replied, “You *are* dead,—the doctor says it.” Why our friend says the soul is not spiritually

quickened in order to the act of F.B.; he refers to the very standards in support of his assertion; he says, "The man is passive till he be quickened by the Holy Spirit;" we can word him more exactly to say, "Our brother," yes, "Yes," the Lord himself. But now, looking closely at his own statement, on the distinction which he insists on between a natural and a moral incapacity. I ask, What avails it to the present question, to the real question at issue? Why, in one sense, I think, the distinction of natural and moral incapacity. If our friend will, let the profit for the present cause, I will say, be that it says: for truly the absolute disability of a man to do the gospel, or do anything spiritually, is a disability of a moral kind; or has come with the degradation of a man's moral relation to God. But how will this distinguish the matter? He evidently intends it in another way. In the language of "depravity or aversion of the heart," as of the source of the incapacity; but, I ask, Is man's disability of a natural kind, or is it as much above his power to renovate or control, as is that spiritual blindness which confounds his vision, to separate from the other, and to discern, if man cannot be responsible for any? but the elevation of his will? But how, I ask, can it be shown, unless the imputation of original sin is altogether denied, that man is more responsible for one effect of the common apostasy than another? I say, it is as true that man cannot will what is good, till awakened by grace, as that he cannot see or understand what is evil. And therefore, as to all bearing on the real question, I follow the distinction of "natural and moral." This aversion of will is natural now, and yet both the limitation of the understanding, and the impotency of the will are moral evils. The impotency or disability which affects both was not inherent in man's original constitution; it is adventitious; it is a moral effect; an accompaniment of man's guilty and fallen condition. And now, *Matters*, such being the state of man, his utter incapacity, not indeed as an intellectual being, to under-

stark, than to will,—but to understand, to reason, to believe, to feel. Now comes the question of faith: Is it a fruit of regenerating grace, or not? I apprehend it will be considered to be what Scripture represents it to be, not the effect of a testimony only, but a trust and a love, a grace of mind only, but a great act of the will, the will of God,—the bond of union to Christ,—the pledge of eternal communion; then, Sir, it must imply an entrance into a new spiritual quality or faculty to the soul, and a new ability. And I find, accordingly, that the Scripture does not only pronounce of faith that it is a spiritual principle, but a wrought disposition; the effect, the fruit, the result of a development, the initial, if you will, of a development, the important, the precious development, which is afterwards recognised in the Apostle John's words, "whoever receives Christ and abides in him, that he may not say, 'they were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.'" And if our friend will say that the regeneration is prior, I will show him the same writer which make that impossible, but though I think, Sir, even the fact that our friend has converse a little with him, might teach him to doubt the confidence of his assertions. But if we compare this passage with what occurs in the First Epistle of John, "whoever is born of God overcometh the world; and the victory that overcometh the world, even the love that is shed abroad in us,"—that the very power of this principle is in its supernatural and heavenly nature and origin. And the apostle represents the "hearing of us,"

as the cause of regeneration (1 John v. 1, or 4, as to regeneration being causal, the Greek word *gignōskō* imply *gignōmi*) a certain degree of spiritual life is implied, and this is plain enough, even as it stands in our translation: "Every one that doeth these things, abideth in him, and the Father's life is made manifest in him."—with chap. ii. 29,—"*Ἐάν τις ἔσται ὁ ἀκούων τῆς φωνῆς τῆς θυγατρὸς τῆς ἀληθείας, ἣν ἔχει ἡμεῖς, οὐκ ἔρχεται ἡ κρίσις ἐπ' αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ ἡ ἀγάπη ἡμετέρα ἐκτελέσεται ἐν αὐτῷ, ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη ἡμετέρα ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη ἧς ἠκούσαμεν τὸν πατέρα ἀκούσαντα τὸν υἱόν, ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς ἠγάπησεν τὸν πατέρα, ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς ἠὲν ἠκούσας τὸν πατέρα ἠγάπησεν τὸν υἱόν.*"—we have only to ask, Does the doing righteously imply the hearing of the Father? It is plain that it is represented as an evidence of the hearing of the Father. But the original fixes this decisively without a shadow of room for any of reasoning: the verb or participle (born) in all the original is unambiguously expressing a perfect past change—*ἦλθόν*—

the hearing of faith, of course,—as a decisive evidence of being of God; while, again, they that are of God, are contradistinguished from all who lie or remain in the wicked one. Indeed, throughout the whole of that epistle, the faith and the confession of Jesus Christ are represented as just synonymous with being of God and having the Spirit. Nor are the words of Paul less decisive than those of John. How often does he assert faith to be the product of a mighty operation of God! nay, in the very passages where he most asserts the importance of faith, he yet seems most earnest to guard against the idea of its antecedency to the first entrance of the quickening Spirit. Witness what he says to the Galatians, in the very act of describing the process of the spiritual life:—"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live,"—then, as if correcting himself, or rather explaining his statement, he adds—"yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;" and next comes faith—"and the life I now live in the flesh I *live*"—live on—enjoy that life—"by the faith of the Son of God." So, even where an apostle sets forth in all their value the acts of faith, he leads us first to conceive of the principle out of which these acts flow—asserts Christ's approach to the soul, and presence and power in it—before he once looks at man's own part in closing with Christ and living on him; in short, recognises the bond of union and of communion as two-fold, but assigns the antecedency, the prominence, the efficacy, to Christ's union with the soul—

γεννηται, and Ημετεροι γενησθε υιους εκ του Θεου. This is so conclusive, that we might rest the refutation of the theory we oppose on these verses alone: for why such care to use the past tense? It is not from any want of familiarity with, or idiomatic aversion to the present or future tense. The same writer often uses the present, when predicating only some quality or state of a subject, as, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous," (δικαιος εστι); "He that committeth sin is (εστιν) of the devil" (1 John iii. 8); but when not only predicating a character, but assigning an antecedent cause, how carefully do they use the past tense! as we have another fine instance in the same chapter, only a verse or two removed from these expressions, 1 John iii. 9, "Whosoever is born of God (γεννημενος) doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born (or hath been begotten—Μ'Αληθη) of God, γεννηται." Now, it is in a like manner that they speak of the *believer* in the Son of God, and assign an antecedent cause for his faith.

the consequence, the actual enjoyment, the conscious and continued benefit, to the soul's forthgoing upon its glorious Object, and active appropriation of Him. For, it matters not whether we regard the apostle as describing the union or the communion here. Even if the latter, still he is comprehensively reviewing the whole order of operation of subjective grace, and distinguishing wherein the vessel of mercy is passive, and wherein active. Sir, our friend says he allows that faith is the bond of union with Christ. We think he dwells too prominently on its relation to objective truth; but when he insists, as you have heard to-day, that faith is not a faculty, nor quality inherent, but an act, I must say that, in this view, I neither can see it to be a solid bond of union, nor reconcile it with what the Scriptures say of Christ, "dwelling in the believer by faith." Most unquestionably the Christian lives by faith: its active exercise has the promise of rich and gracious rewards: but alas for the union of which such an act were the primary tenure! Sir, it were frail indeed. Faith is the bond of union, but mainly as it is a spiritual effect—a grace rather than an act: and even as a means of communion, its efficacy in keeping hold of Christ were doubtful, truly, if it were on the acts and exercises of our mind alone *that* depended, and not on the living, informed, and immortal principle!

Now, let me come to our friend's appeal to the words of our blessed Saviour. They not only do not bear him out; the very passages he cites do in themselves, or, taken with their immediate context, refute his theory. He, of course, did not forget to mention those well-known words, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life"—a most important and humbling statement! But why is it that those who are ever ringing the changes on these words, so seldom let us hear the cognate statement standing almost by the side of the other: "No man can come to me, except the Father draw him?" It is in vain to say, that this is just to be understood of moral suasion, of objective light, of common grace; for from all these our Saviour distinguishes this influence. It is of an internal

and effectual illumination that He speaks. He declares, not only that no man can come to Him unless thus persuaded or taught, but "every man that *hath* heard and *hath* learned of (from *patre*) the Father cometh unto me." Sir, it is manifest that our Saviour speaks of a subjective illumination,—an efficacious, and, if I may not say irresistible, at least invincible grace, which is prior in order of nature and causality to the very first act of faith, but, unlike the outward and common call, always surely issues in faith.* At this point in the appellant's reasoning occurred one or more of those fallacies on which I have remarked. He said that our Saviour speaks only of those who come, or who believe, as having life; whereas, if a man lives before he comes, he is, in other words, saved before he approaches the Saviour. What need has he, then, to come at

* It is plain that Mr. S. goes into the error we are dealing with, proceeding on the assumption, that Christ, by these words, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," affirms the sufficiency of the sinner's will; whereas, He only describes its melancholy aversion—nor is it a just representation of the matter so only to connect this expression with the other, "No man can come unto me except the Father draw him," as if this last statement brought out no additional doctrine but that of the alienation of the will asserted in the former. Mr. S. quotes it very passingly, at if all that were necessary to reconcile it with his system, were just to mention the additional words, "ye will not," &c.; but the reader will observe, that, while in the one declaration, (John v. 40), Christ charges home on unbelievers their guilty aversion of will, in the other, (John vi. 44), he does not simply say, "No man can come unless he will,"—or, "Every man can if he will," which, on the theory of our opponents, we should have expected, but, "No man can come, except the Father draw him." In short, in the one verse He asserts the fact of the alienation of the will: in the other, the fact of the impotency of the will. And the harmony of the two statements is not fairly expressed by the unscriptural assumption, 'man can believe, &c., if he will;' but, 'Such is the sinner's enmity and aversion to God, that only a divine and effectual operation on the soul can persuade and enable him either to will or to do:' 'yet, that for this impotency he is responsible, so that he may justly be charged with it as his sin.' So Calvin, on John vi. 44, "Christ does not simply accuse their depravity, but at the same time admonishes them, that it is of the peculiar gift of God that men are enabled to embrace the doctrine which he sets before them: the doctrine of the Gospel is promiscuously preached to all, but is not perceived without renovation of the mind, and a new power or faculty of spiritual understanding: therefore, faith is not of the will of man (*arbitrio*), but of a Divine gift (*divinitus conferri*),—"quia nemo unquam sponte ad Christum accederet, nisi quem Deus Spiritu suo preveniet."

all? Sir, let our brother reconcile with this, if he can, Christ's own declaration just quoted. Does he not see that effectual grace is affirmed by the Saviour to be antecedent,—though we do not say in order of time? He knows that we all allow, that to our conscious enjoyment of life or salvation faith is necessary,—that we with him press the command to believe; and we do not less than he proclaim the encouragements to believe. But here, I insist on it, is our authority for distinguishing the power of coming to Christ from any natural capacity to come, inherent in the fallen sinner; and, while we ply the invitation, or announce the rule of duty, for looking to the revelation of the Divine arm for the effectual ability to obey.

In vain it is argued, that our Saviour declared, in the same discourse, that except we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, we have no life; as our friend quoted also to the same purpose, "He that hath the Son hath life." The question still is open here, What this having of the Son implies, and what sense "life" bears? and how obvious is it, on the principles of common sense, that to "eating and drinking" some degree of life is presupposed! It will not do! Sir, the analogy goes all against our friend; and it makes the case no better, in reference to this objection, to tell us that our Saviour anticipated the difficulty, and provided the answer, in saying with emphasis, "I am the living bread." An answer this is, but an answer, Moderator, which should rectify our opponent's theory: it is in no way out of harmony with the doctrine he impugned. I wish our brother would see that, just because our Saviour is "living, heavenly bread," it belongs to Him to do what dead inert nature cannot do. He can approach, He can prepossess, He can unite himself to the soul. He can at once be the bread objectively proposed to us, on which faith must feed; yet so as, at the same time, by his subjective operation, He is no less the cause of life, than, as externally presented, He is its food and nourishment. There the earthly analogy fails, as all illustrations of this glorious subject must fail; but we cannot allow that the common-sense argument is to be set aside—of a power

preceding its exercise, and life preceding appetite and action. Sir, what is man, and what is faith? What does the whole Bible describe the natural man to be? "Enmity to God"—such enmity that "he cannot be subject;" and while in the flesh, and not in the Spirit, that "he cannot please God." Now, is it not said again, that without faith it is impossible to please Him? So that to be in the flesh and to be in the state of unbelief are one and the same; and, on the other hand, that to be in the faith and to be in the Spirit are one. The flesh, the principle or spirit of disobedience, has just its counterpart in faith, which is obedience; and I do not need to tell this house, —the clerical part at least,—that "the flesh" is inclusive of the powers of knowledge or apprehension, and also of the whole habit and affection of the soul (the *phronēin*). I need not tell you that man neither can see the kingdom of God, nor love the truth, while he is so in the flesh: and that then he is no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit, when the Spirit dwelleth in him. Though we should understand this of the ulterior communion, still it implies that in the very first acts of spiritual discernment, and of the obedience of faith, is to be recognised the evidence, at least, of the Spirit's entrance, though not His dwelling,—the change by which the innate enmity has been transformed into love,—the flesh into spirit.*

* There is a glaring self-contradiction in Mr. S.'s printed notes, in his admission at p. 15, that the soul of the unbeliever is *dead*, and yet that the first act of that soul—faith—on which all is made to turn—is *before* all spiritual life: Again, a contradiction in holding that the heart, in its depraved state, is "alienated from God," "enmity," &c., yet that it can perceive and consent to the gospel of God without a subjective change. He asks, how can a man love God without knowing God? We admit that he cannot; but we equally maintain that such a knowledge as is accompanied with love, is only found where the heart as well as understanding is spiritually quickened—or in other words, that the principle of love to God or to His truth is coeval in its formation with the principle of saving faith:—In fact, if faith is obedience, and all obedience is comprehended in love, it is manifest that love and faith are inseparable, however the assent of faith does in order of nature precede the love of gratitude. And thus, by another course, we come again to the conclusion that spiritual life is implied in faith and the assent of it, as well as, in its conscious and full enjoyment, dependent upon it.

It is alike surprising and grieving to see how our brother misrepresents the doctrinal sentiments of those from whom he differs, and then indulges

I only add on this point, that our friend's definition of faith is as defective as his view of its nature and origin. He says, the Scripture seldom defines it, but that it is plainly represented "as the belief of the truth!" Who doubts this? No one; but is that the only definition, or rather is it a definition at all? Is not the question between us, what this belief implies,—where the *heart* is concerned in believing unto righteousness, and in receiving and resting on the Son of God?—And thus we arrive at the last point on which it seems necessary to follow the pleadings of our reverend brother,—what is admitted by him, as well as refused, concerning the agency of the Spirit.

You find this announced under the second head of Mr. S's. brief statement. Let us do our brother all manner of justice. I regret I should be necessitated so much to remonstrate with one whom in many respects I highly esteem, and whose good talents and good intentions I only wish to see devoted with better effect to a juster cause. I have taken part in these pleadings far more in the spirit of one who would persuade

in such inferences from these views of their doctrine, as indeed he may well "shudder to mention," but which, in fact, are chargeable on his own doctrine only. "It is in vain," he says, (after quoting John iii. 15, 16, 36, and v. 24, 25), "It is in vain here to attempt to plead, that the soul quickened and made alive without Christ," (Who ever said so?) "has not far to seek, or long to wait, for Christ." Mr. S. surely knows, that if any of those whom he opposes, use even this latter phrase, they are to be understood as speaking of rest and satisfaction in Christ. This the soul is indeed quickened to seek; but we hold that Christ is *with* the soul even in this earliest spiritual operation whereby it is stirred to *seek*, as well as meets with it in the sense of being *found* by it to its joy. It is the other system which supposes a soul to *act* without Christ, and *that* in so important a movement as faith implies, the very transition of death to life. In vain he refuses the inference, that on his view, faith is the act of a soul dead in sins! Nor does it at all reconcile his doctrine to common sense to distinguish, as he does, between the accomplishing of the regenerating change and the change accomplished. Witsius, and every divine, will, no doubt, allow this distinction, but not to the effect which our friend intends. What though our brother admits that *in* believing the soul is renewed? yet still the faith is distinctly maintained by him to be the cause in order of nature prior to any renewal; and, as the soul cannot be both dead and alive spiritually at once; and as cause and effect are not the same, the faith Mr. S. contends for is indeed in its act, and while acting, the operation of a dead soul; and so a *dead faith*! Such is the fair result, logically, of his premises—the result both of his metaphysical and theological views—however much, we believe, he may deprecate the result!

him, than in the desire to confute him. I had hoped he would have fallen from his appeal before it came up to this Court, and that we should have come to one. But I am necessitated to say, with this statement before me, that it is most unsatisfactory, and that our brother's defective view of the Holy Spirit's operation is palpably brought out. He says, "I believe that in no case is the faith of any individual self-originated, but that it is wholly attributable to the [personal agency of the Spirit of God, and to that extent, therefore, is every converted man a subject of divine influence before believing; but I do not believe that the effect of this previous influence (*i.e.* antecedently to actual faith) amounts to what is ordinarily understood, and in Scripture spoken of, as regeneration, or the new birth, which is expressly ascribed to faith as its instrumental cause, or to the truth received by faith.—(Gal. iii. 26; 1 Peter i. 23; James i. 18.)" And Mr. S. adds a note as to his sense of the word "regeneration." He says, "he understands by it the change *produced* in a sinner, in virtue of which he is a new creature. Of this change (he continues) the Spirit is the author or efficient cause. the word, or the truth contained in the word, is, strictly speaking, the instrumental cause, and faith is the means through which it operates. He would say, therefore, that the Spirit regenerates by the word *through* faith." I submit, then, if, notwithstanding the apparent recognition of the Spirit's operation, in distinction from the objective presentation of the truth, there be anything conceded here at all which is pertinent to the real question. If our friend is allowed to assume his own meaning of regeneration, and to hold it equivalent to sanctification, or the full development of spiritual life, or the active exercise of grace, we might with safety adopt most of his "note;" but it is evident that under the "new creature" he includes all life, even the most initial; and that in his exposition under head *second*, he carefully guards against the admission that faith is included at all in "the regenerating influence" which the Spirit puts forth. How, then, it is natural to ask, is the Spirit at all concerned in the production of faith,—what is the influence He

exerts distinct from the application of the word? Here he is silent, or rather he contends that there is no influence at all that is effectual or saving; faith is with him prior to the regeneration in any one stage or part or degree of it. It is not regeneration, it is what must be done or exercised as the means of it; for it is an act, he tells us, an act of the soul, not a capacity, not a spiritual thing as emanating from the Holy Ghost directly. Let him but admit this last, and we care not so much about the word "life;" but let us not forget that Mr. S. holds the capacity for believing to be innate in man. What, then, is this agency of the Spirit? what is it distinct from the objective truth? or from such common grace as the unconverted and hypocrite enjoy, but resist withal, and abide in their alienation from God; or, turning from the way of righteousness, become worse than before? Now, if this be all that our friend admits, it is clear that, though he may denominate the Spirit the author or efficient cause of regeneration, he in no relevant sense owns Him the efficient cause of faith. Nay, the word itself being, according to him, the means of regeneration only through faith,—a faith of which the sinner possesses the capacity,—Sir, I see no more to be admitted thus, than the grossest Pelagian would admit,—that the Spirit, as inditing the Scriptures, is in some way the cause, by His personal agency, of faith. Who ever denied this? Pelagius did not! Cælestius did not! Arminius did not! Episcopius did not!* Objective grace, they allowed,—some of them, more distinctly far than the present opponent does here, admitted a certain internal suasion or illumination; which still was not invincibly effectual, and in short depended for its certainty on the will and power of the creature. It implied no such quickening as our standards recognise as necessary to the subjecting of the will to God;

* See works of Augustine, vols. v. and x. passim—especially lib. i. de gratia, contra Pelag. et Cælest. Also articles of Syn. of Dort against the Remonstrants, "in rejectione errorum, Thesis vi. (contra Episcopium), &c." Dr. Willis would earnestly recommend to those who have access to the writings of F. Turretin, the large and truly valuable chapter, "de Vocatione et Fide," vol. ii., Geneva edition.

no certain, efficacious, internal grace, acting directly on the state of the soul itself; no light of life. Oh, sir, what is all other light without this? What is it to a soul carnal, earthly, devilish? What are all objective appliances upon a will which is by its very nature now, opposed to God, dead in sin? Let that objective light be clear as it may, let moral suasion be brought to bear with the utmost power that can be conceived, separate from a vivifying operation—nay, sir, to speak with reverence, suppose such a soul brought into the very midst of the celestial glory, translated to where it might see the face of Christ, and of God in Him, in the very light of heaven—still that heart remaining unchanged,—that internal subjective aversion,—that reigning enmity,—unbroken,—I should expect no more from this mere contact of the dead soul with the glory of God, than I should expect from the rays of the meridian sun playing around the eyeballs of the man born blind! The light may shine in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. It is not enough that our darkness be brought into contact with the light, for what fellowship have they? We ourselves must become light in the Lord!

The speaker cited a passage from Luther, and a quotation from one whom he might term the historian of Luther, whose words had only the other evening delighted, as his presence had adorned, the Assembly.—Pelagianism was accounted by Luther one of the pillars of the antichristian system which he applied himself to subvert. He saw in it the exaltation of the human will to the derogation of that grace which was all in all,—and so we find him no less earnest in opposing “will-works” than self-righteousness. “They say that nature is corrupt, but the qualities of nature, notwithstanding, are sound and uncorrupt, which also they attribute even unto devils. Upon this ground they reason after this manner: if the natural qualities of man be sound and uncorrupt, then is his understanding and his will sound and uncorrupt, and so, consequently, all other qualities of nature are pure and perfect in him. To know these things it is necessary for you, that ye

may hold the sincerity of the doctrine of faith. Where they say, then, that the natural qualities of man are sound and uncorrupt, and thereof do infer that a man is able of himself to fulfil the law, and to love God with all his heart, applying these things to the spiritual kingdom, I deny the consequence." "And here (continues Luther, on Galatians, chap. ii. and iii.), I make a distinction between the natural and the spiritual qualities, which they confound and mingle together; and I say that the spiritual qualities are not sound, but corrupt, yea, utterly quenched through sin both in man and devil; so that there is in them nothing else but a corrupt understanding, and a will continually striving against the will of God, which can think nothing else but what is against God. Notwithstanding, I grant that the natural qualities are uncorrupt. But what qualities are they? That a man drowned in sin and iniquity, and a bond-slave of Satan, hath will, reason, and power, notwithstanding, to execute the office of a magistrate, to govern a family, to guide a ship, to build a house, and to do such other things as are subject unto man, for these things are not taken from him. We do not, then, deny but that these sentences are true in the corporal kingdom; but if ye wrest them to the spiritual kingdom, I utterly deny them; for there, as I said, we are clean overwhelmed and drowned in sin. Whatsoever is in our will is evil, whatsoever is in our understanding is error; wherefore, in spiritual matters man hath nothing but darkness, error, ignorance, malice, and perverseness, both of will and understanding. How, then, shall he work well, fulfil the law, and love God?" By a corresponding statement he meets the objection as to the responsibility of the creature, and denies that the commands of God must necessarily be in exact adaptation to the powers of the sinner, as now utterly depraved; but I need not say that he holds forth the rich provision of the gospel in the regenerating grace, which imparts fresh powers, through a spiritual baptism into Christ. Nor need we be at a loss to see what estimate he forms of a true faith:—"Faith in Christ, and not the law (he says), maketh

us the children of God." But while contrasting faith with the law, he is so far from representing faith in its act or exercise, as prior to regeneration, that he adds—"Besides that they who are baptized are regenerated and renewed by the Holy Ghost to a heavenly righteousness and to eternal life, there riseth in them also a new light and a new flame; there rise in them new and holy affections, as the fear of God, true faith, and assured hope, &c. There beginneth in them also a new will." Dr. Merle D'Aubigné,* quoting a portion of Luther's ninety-nine propositions against Pelagianism (some of which, to a similar effect as above, Dr. Willis read), has, with great discernment and philosophy, remarked—"The Reformation attacked first rationalism, then superstition. It proclaimed what were God's prerogatives before it pruned off the excrescences that had sprung from man. Some of the schoolmen, such as Pelagius and other doctors, had taught that man possesses liberty of himself, or the capacity of loving God and doing good; this liberty Luther denied, not because he would deprive man of it, but, on the contrary, because he wanted to obtain it for him. The contest, then, in this great question is not, as is commonly said, between freedom and bondage; it is between freedom coming from man, and freedom coming from God." "Pelagianism at once corrupted sound doctrine, and strengthened the hierarchy; with the same hand wherewith it depressed grace it exalted the church; for grace, it is God's;—and the church, it is man's;—no sooner was salvation taken out of the hand of God than it fell into that of the priests."

Pity if at this time errors should be revived which strike at the root of our Reformed doctrine. But, independently of this, the effects were greatly to be lamented, were the doctrine of human sufficiency to mix itself up with our addresses to the souls of men. It is calculated to deceive and mislead them. I tremble for the effect; in the adoption by our hearers of slight views of faith, and of repentance, and of regeneration itself! I cannot but anticipate that the pernicious influence

* *History of the Reformation*, vol. i.

By the passage referred to, and all that followed it, such a full development of life was not on faith, but so as that the new life was rather presupposed as anterior to faith. It is true, the Apostle John says, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that, believing, ye might have life" (John vi. 34). But does not the same Apostle elsewhere address believers as already in possession of spiritual life he owns as already theirs? These things have I written unto you of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Son of God, proving that he is concerned with the connection between faith and life, and that he is concerned with the passage of faith to all life. Nay, nor any other than the Son of God more emphatically than the Father, previous quickening influence. It is true that in the epistle Mr. S. has appealed to the fact that his friend so unequivocally admitted the presence of the Holy Spirit even to the point of death. He hoped that he would see that this was not the truth rather the point in hand—that the spiritual life, not the instrumental life, was what seemed to hold, but the symptom of the spiritual life as well as the means of ulterior life. It is true, then, he could assure him. For it was a spiritual life that faith was the germ of spiritual life, and to admit itself to be a spiritual germ, it was not to observe that in the one case it was a natural principle, a natural principle—though divinely quickened and quickened faith; and did not the Scriptures warn against it? In the other case it was a spiritual principle—it was a spiritual principle, but divinely impelled, but heaven produced, but heaven quickened, if he pleased, that this was not life

But let it be remembered, that was the question they were dealing with at present. If it were only meant to be understood that the sinner may still be addressed as a rational being, though spiritually dead—that he has understanding, and is able to distinguish him from irrational beings: that he has eyes to see, and ears to hear. But to affirm that the dead sinner possesses faculties sufficient for his moral elevation, means either this—which is nothing to the purpose; or it means—what is serious error, and what is dangerous. He would affectionately guard his friend against the error. The sinner possesses, in his depraved state, a power of intellectual apprehension, a capacity of willing and choosing good. But what is the spiritual account of fallen man? Does not the Spirit of God declare that, “the *natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” He begged Mr. S. to mark the utterance of the words of such a grave statement with his definition of the competency of the sinner. Their friend should remember that the question was not about a simple assent, a mere act of the intellect, but about an article of revealed truth. A mere assent to that truth was within the reach of the unrenewed sinner. And the devils believe and tremble! But though his assent was a part of true faith, and such assent, by itself, could not be identified (metaphysically) with assent to the gospel, and yet that was not a full account of the spiritual elevation. What they (the Committee) affirmed to be the competency of the sinner was, a belief of the truth of the gospel, and promise, implying a spiritual understanding of the truth of the gospel, implying an acceptance of the truth of the gospel; in short, a receiving of the things of the Spirit of God. Now, to affirm a faculty or capacity of the sinner to do this, to belong to the depraved sinner, to what is the spiritual account of the Pelagian error of the sufficiency of the human will to choose what is spiritually good—the error of Pelagianism, which was contended against by the renowned

Augustine; or the semi-Pelagian error which followed it, founded on a supposed adaptation between the objective truth in the word, or at all events common grace, and the sinner's inherent powers; which still left unacknowledged an internal, and subjective, and effectual influence of the Divine Spirit? Such an effectual operation on the will of man is asserted in our excellent Catechism, in the definition of "effectual calling;" showing that, so far as that received and approved form of words is concerned, there was a certain *renovation* acknowledged as entering into the very process of the production of faith, although distinct from that thorough renewal which is appropriately placed in the answer concerning] "sanctification."

Dr. Willis proceeded to say, that when the argument is of saving faith, it concerned the faith that "receives Christ," and which, as their opponent admitted, and he rejoiced he admitted, constituted a part at least of the bond of union with the Saviour; the Spirit himself, or Christ by the Spirit, first apprehending the sinner, ere the sinner can apprehend Christ. Now, was it strange to say, that where the Spirit already was, *in order to faith*, there life was? Could their brother be serious in likening the effect of the Spirit's approach to the soul—this contact of Christ, "the life," "the quickening Spirit," with the dead sinner—to the effect of the contact of the hand with the table—an inert though living substance, with inanimate matter, which could not be nor become other than passive? Nay, is it anything more than we should expect, that such a presence or approach of Christ should quicken, and that the soul thus quickened, and thus only, should be rendered active in closing with Christ? Does not every figurative description of faith include this activity? and can there be action without an agent? spiritual receiving, resting, appropriating, without a spiritual habitude or faculty imparted, proper to such acts? Neither did he (Dr. W.) allow that the thing was made better by holding that the inability was only moral, not natural—as if a moral incapacity alone inferred responsibility. This distinction had been in various quarters insisted on, but he

held it fallacious—in the sense, at least, and to the effect with which the distinction was applied in this question. They say that it is in the will alone lies the incapacity; but are we sure of that? Are you prepared to allow, is our friend prepared to hold, that no spiritual incapacity is found with man but an alienated will? And were it even so, I still ask, Is that moral incapacity not natural, in the sense essential to our argument? How came man by it? Was it by the fall or not? Is this alienation of will inherent in the fallen creature, as such, or not? If it be, then you may call it moral, but at least it is natural-moral; and the hypothesis which denies man's responsibility, in so far as he is held to be without spiritual perception or power of faith, will carry you to deny imputed guilt, and the covenant of works altogether. Let us not think that the setting forth of such a view of man's spiritual disability furnishes the hearer of the gospel with an excuse for unbelief, or prevents the amplest unfolding of the many encouraging provisions of grace. On the contrary, it is when we inadequately estimate the real impotency of the sinner, we shall be on the most disadvantageous ground for dealing with him. Ours is to bring the word nigh: but we go in reliance on the Spirit of the Almighty, to act with it, as well as by it; and it is just when the helpless sinner most feels his helplessness, and lies low at the footstool of the sovereign and the holy God—that he is in the position most likely to appreciate the rich and ample offers of mercy. It is but mocking the sinner's misery, to tell him that he can believe if he would, when the preacher knows, or ought to know, that the will itself is in bondage. Can he will spiritually? No; and though he could, the will, as even a sainted apostle confesses, might be present, and yet an impotency to perform remain. It is the forthgoing of the light of God!—it is not only the word brought nigh (that, indeed, as concerns the warrant and rule of faith); but the subjective manifestation of Christ is as essential as the objective discovery of Him; and this we must testify in its fitting proportion, if we would seek to bring the

sinner into the position to which it is the very design of the gospel to bring him; that in which he may most humbly and gratefully refer his salvation from first to last—even his very exercise of a renewed will, as well as the power that renovated it—to free and efficacious grace.

From Report of Presbytery, May 1845.

Dr Willis entered into a full examination* of the opinions of Mr. Scott. He was willing to give credit to their brother for ingenuousness, when he expressed so bold a confidence in the views he had adopted. But if he agreed with him in attaching importance to those views, it was that he saw their injurious bearing on the pure and free gospel, with which their brother had sought to identify them, and because of the serious extent to which they must be injurious; for he (Dr. Willis) agreed in what the report set forth of the relation which the point immediately in question bore to other doctrines of the faith; in fact, error at this point stretched in its effect over the whole domain of evangelical truth. Accordingly, in recollecting what their reverend brother had said, he cared not in which way he took up the argument. He would at once expose the fallacy of his leading statement, that faith preceded all spiritual life; and then he would glance at the several points involved, and argued on by him—or the views set forth of faith, of the sinner's capacities, and of subjective grace.

He had strongly and repeatedly referred to passages of Scripture which unquestionably connected life with faith; but he was utterly wrong in his exegetical as well as his theological scheme. It was impossible to reconcile Scripture language to his assumptions. It did not follow that faith did not presuppose life, because life in an important sense follows it. The whole question was taken for granted in his exposition of the passages he referred to. None of us deny that faith is necessary to the enjoyment of salvation, and is in order antecedent

to the possession of many of the blessings which spiritual life comprehends. But we deny that it is antecedent to all life ; or that life simply means "acceptance with God, and the image of God," as their friend repeatedly asserted. Indeed, even upon this definition, they could demonstrate the groundlessness of the inference that life does in no degree precede the exercise of faith. "Life," however, has a far more comprehensive meaning in Scripture ; it sometimes denotes the state of acceptance with God, and sometimes again the consciousness of being in that state ; sometimes the image of God, or the new nature ; sometimes the development of that nature. Let us see how the definition alleged would stand with Rom. viii. 13—"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye *shall live*." Is it not plain that this last expression cannot be understood in the sense of his exegesis ? Will our friend say, that the life here promised as following on mortification of the body through the Spirit, means "acceptance with God or the image of God" ?—and will he say that this life *following* on sanctification does in no degree presuppose life prior to sanctification ? Yet he may as justly say this, as reason that life, when mentioned in a similar connection with faith, or as consequent upon faith, cannot stand with the supposition of life, in some degree of it, being antecedent to faith. Then, take another passage, one quoted by himself :—why it refutes his own theory of interpretation. I refer to John xvii. 3—"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Let it be remembered that the theory alleged is, that life consists in acceptance with God and the image of God ; and that, so understood, it altogether follows faith—in no degree precedes it. Well, their brother admitted that knowledge in this text is equivalent to faith. What, I ask, then, is the image of God ? Does it not consist in part in knowledge ? Are we not renewed after God in knowledge ? Here, then, even on this circumscribed and unjustly limited definition of life, he virtually admits that faith

is life, as well as leads to it. Does he not see that the very thing he maintains, that life so follows only on faith, as that faith is not itself life, he is forced to recede from, even on his own principle? But, Moderator, these very illustrations of the want of comprehensiveness in Mr. S's. interpretation of Scripture language, prepare us to discern a leading and pervading error of his theology. It is apparent that he misconceives the true place which faith holds in the covenant of grace. That covenant is to us, it should never be forgotten, a covenant mainly of simple *promise*. It stands not as to its condition on human faith, any more than human obedience in the general. Strictly and directly, it was made with the Mediator. Whatever is received and enjoyed by us is in right of His fulfilment of the condition, and is in effect the accomplishment of the promise of life given to us in Him, or given, we may say, to Him for us, before the world began. Hence it comes that faith also is a fruit of the promise—a part of the salvation, and so of the *life*. No matter that, with reference to other or ulterior blessings, it stands as an antecedent to a consequent—yes, and a means to an end. Why, so personal holiness, as already seen, stands as an antecedent to life, in some sense of the word. But life is nevertheless truly comprehensive of all the promised blessings of the covenant; and as the grace of faith ranks among the promises, it is no other than life—it is indeed a means of salvation, but as truly is it a part of the salvation. Now, our friend overlooks this; at least, his system does. He represents faith too much in the light of a condition—we do not deny its preciousness, but we deny the place which he assigns to it. It is not anterior to all life: it is an effect and fruit of life, as well as a cause of life. Sir, even under the old covenant—in which, our friend will admit, salvation or happiness was absolutely made dependent on man's obedience—spiritual life was of necessity presupposed in some sense necessary to the required obedience. Man, even under that constitution of things, lived to obey, as well as obeyed to live. And *a fortiori*, shall not man under a covenant of the most ab-

solute grace, believe *from* life as well as *unto* life? Or shall we be told that it is inconsistent to represent faith as the manifestation and effect of life, in a certain measure of it—shall we be told that the obedience of faith is not life, in the case where obedience is a fruit of the promise, and not at all the meritorious condition of the covenant; when, even under the old covenant, the obedience, which constituted the very condition, necessarily implied life, as well as conducted to its enjoyment and its perfection?

Dr. Willis next insisted on the defective view of faith that mingled with these opinions. He thought their rev. brother might well doubt his own principle, when it led him so to repudiate the idea of faith being a mysterious thing. He had said that many mystified the matter, and he had asked, was not faith in the Gospel testimony just the same as faith in any testimony—saving only in the difference of the matter of the testimony—the thing believed? He (Dr. W.) would answer, did not the Scripture speak of faith as a mystery—and not of the object of belief only? for “God believed on in the world,” as well as “God manifested in the flesh,” was “a great mystery.” He would ask if the sacred writers did not emphatically characterise faith as a peculiar thing in its cause, in its exercise, in its effects; if they did not expatiate upon the mighty operation of God as manifested in the very formation of faith; if, besides calling the objects of faith spiritual things, they did not characterise the knowledge of them which faith implied as spiritual knowledge? What did Paul mean by seeking for the Colossians that they might be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding? It was impossible to read the New Testament, either in our translation or especially in the original, without perceiving how the characters given of faith, took it out of the rank of a merely intellectual assent to a testimony. No doubt it included assent; but would assent of the judgment in reference to testimony come up to the Scripture account of faith as a receiving Christ, uniting with Christ, resting on Christ, eating

Christ's flesh, drinking his blood, &c.? Their rev. brother here again, he must say, lost sight of a grand characteristic of the covenant of grace: which, as it attributes all our salvation to the love of God the Father, the merit of the Son, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, so at all steps of the evolution of the blessed design exhibits this effectual grace as preventing, going before, any agency of man. Their brother did not deny faith to be the bond of union with Christ, but then he seemed to reason as if it were the only bond; whereas that bond is twofold—the apprehension of the sinner by Christ, going before the soul's apprehension of Christ, and being in reality the more important as well as the antecedent cause and principle of the union. What were that union if it were a mere human faith? What were its stability? Faith is indeed precious, very precious; but its value lies in its being a spiritual effect—it is an emanation from Him who is the "Life," and whose union with the soul gives to the soul all its power and virtue to unite with Himself.

Now, of the capacities of the soul: here too the theory before us is at fault, or its erroneousness may be seen in an additional light. Our friend says he shrinks from the idea of representing man as incapable of faith, or of representing a subjective change as necessary to its exercise. It seems to place a physical impossibility in the way, says he. Now the fallacy here lies in the use of the word physical. There is a sense in which they did not contend for a physical change—the essential constitution of man as a rational being was not altered by regenerating grace. In fact, he would show immediately that the opposite scheme, and not ours, is irreconcilable with the rational constitution of man. But when "physical" referred to a spiritual renovation—when, not reason, but reason corrupted and depraved, was the subject of the change—when the question was, not of man's merely rational, but his moral character—not his capacities of thought, of knowledge, of will, but of knowing, choosing, willing according to God; then they did maintain, the Scriptures required them to maintain, the

necessity of a subjective change, or change of nature. And this the best theologians of older times—the Calvins, Turretins, and Owens—had not hesitated to call a physical change. The impossibility of man's believing or obeying the gospel without this, was literally asserted in what the apostle declared, that the carnal mind is enmity to God— that it cannot be subject. It was asserted or implied in that further declaration in 1 Cor. ii. 12,—“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit that is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” It will not do to say that the Spirit enables us to believe by simply casting light on the testimony, or presenting the object of belief in a persuasive and engaging light. Let any man examine the context, and he will see that the Spirit is represented as not only revealing the objects of belief, but as necessary in His presence and efficacious influence with the soul believing; so necessary, in this view, that the perception is said to be as if by the Spirit himself; no other knoweth or discerneth the things of God, and the soul only perceives them as the Spirit of God imparteth the perceptions; otherwise, it is there declared to be as much above mere reason, especially carnal and depraved reason, to apprehend the things of God, as for an irrational creature to apprehend the things of man. Mr. S. had said that it was not for him to explain how the dead soul could believe; and, referring to the analogies of human life and human powers, he said that, though the word of man could not cause that the dead should hear, it was otherwise with God. That is most true; but see the fallacy here again. It is of God, indeed, to make the dead to hear or believe; but the question is, Does God, can God, make the dead to hear without the communication of a principle of life, which shall be, in order of nature and of causality, antecedent to hearing? No, sir, to speak with reverence, even God cannot do this—and when I say so, I attribute to Omnipotence not weakness but perfection: Sir, even God cannot do this without reversing the order of nature, and destroying the constitution of man! and therefore, I say, it is the opposite

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APPENDIX D.

is no relevancy to the question he raises. One may understand much error and inconsistency in a man's way of life, and yet say, "He is a genuine Christian in heart and holy feeling, for, within his breast, there is a small church, containing the advocates of the Christian religion, and these men have been trained for Heaven, and will go there, each in his own way." His conclusion from this is a very reasonable distinction, as I repeat in the 8th paragraph of the report from men like Chalmers and Lathrop, and from men like Newman, from an Arnold, or a Phillips, from an Emerson, Chalmers, and a McChesney, those who have considered their joining in the harmonies of the Christian religion, and have not separated them on earth.

But Mr. C. contented himself with saying that it is the duty of men to see from his facts, that men should love each other, and should settle their doctrinal differences, and should be united in love, and should hold in common of the Christian religion what they hold in common of the human race, and will assent to this. This is the lesson which he has drawn from these facts, and of the bearing of the facts, he did not say a single word. But it is not the bearing of the facts; it is to deprecate their doctrinal value, to hold up necessity in their separation, to show the practical importance and the necessity of the divine qualities of judgment as to divine truth, and the bond of union among Christians, and to say that the bond of union should be something deeper and more substantial than agreement in a long-drawn system of dogmas. There is an organ or faculty of the soul deeper than the intellect, by which, apart from accurate doctrinal questions, truths of religion may be apprehended and approved.

Mr. C. may allege, no doubt, that he has guarded against this, and that he has thought to depreciate theological science, and to show that a theology which pretends to rest on a foundation of feeling, ignoring objective truth, is "self-conceit and delusion." But, besides that he, in almost the

in the Protestants, you Broad school and Close school, asserting the efficacy of atonement, or imputed righteousness, or baptism, or regeneration, or any regeneration, be it enough that in the midst of all this about points you exercise your logical faculties and get among the clouds. We prefer an atmosphere in which men can breathe more freely. "*Could we get at it,*" says Dr. C. S. L. Where? and echo, we fear, only answers Where?

But let the question seriously be, where and how to find the "essential," meaning by that the "pure and undefiled religion" which is the hope of which we are required to be able to define, reason, or the charity commended in the text of this Epistle. We think we can show how to get at it; and it is just, not to depend on the whole—for again we say we are not discussing exceptional cases—by the very way which the sermon depicts. It is by knowledge of doctrine, it is by faith; and it is measured by how much that knowledge is "accurate" and "definitive." What is essential to salvation, in the low sense of what is enough to keep a man out of hell, or to ensure his being saved, "though as by fire," we care not to dispute. But let us it would be a poor reason—and we think Dr. C. S. L. would allow it to be such—for holding Romanism, with all its excursions of the rule of faith and standard of morals, and on the ground of justification before God, to be equally adequate with Protestantism to save and sanctify a soul, because a Peter or a Thomas A' Kempis conserved the essential faith, and lived holily in an atmosphere corrupting and deadly to millions of others; So it is a poor reason for disparaging mature doctrinal knowledge, that we can point to dying ones who found heaven, though children in understanding, or who were saved in the absence of any power to define or prove one article of a creed. Do the sacred writers warrant our being content with what is held the "essential to salvation?" Do they think it sufficient if we be and remain babes? Do they not bid us in understanding be men? Do they—provided that there is but union with the foundation—make light of building upon that foundation wood, hay, or stubble?

We must urge that there is something selfish in the question, What is essential or simply sufficient for ourselves? That may suffice to save as by fire at last which does not prevent the suffering of great loss, by exposing to be driven about with every wind of doctrine. Yea, safe for one, it may, when embraced as a rule or standard by others, be fraught with peril eternal; for there is a truth that saves and sanctifies, and a lie that tends to damn, if we are to believe Scripture. Still, it is a misrepresentation of the theologians—and unfairly insinuated here as to Scottish theologians especially, as coming of their peculiar intellectual genius—that they have been prone to reduce religion in its ultimate essence too much to a “thing of knowledge.” We might challenge our preacher to produce one of those associated with the defence or exposition of our generally received creeds who has not anxiously guarded against mere head-knowledge, as they have styled it, or who has failed to enunciate the necessity of testing whether knowledge, or faith, by its fruits. But though not reducing religion to knowledge as the essence of it, they have, to be sure, traced religion to knowledge as its source. They have only thus done what is required by common sense, and what was done by Christ and his Apostles before them. Indeed, the contrast must strike every reader between the low estimate of doctrinal intelligence everywhere expressed in this discourse, and the high estimate made of right intellectual perceptions, or soundness in the faith, in almost every page of the sacred books. Our preacher, in trying to get at “the something” which is far more essential than accurate knowledge, comes at last—that looks well, at any rate—“to love or loyalty to Christ.” Be it so. Is this love or loyalty equally to be found in the neglect of the doctrine and commands of the great Teacher, or in their observance? It is not in terms of depreciation that He speaks of the least of His commandments; nor does He rate it as a trivial thing to teach men to do His will. And what say His apostles? Did not every person who had attained to the knowledge of His commands: the want of it was a hindrance to growth in it.

exhorted to and prayed for as belonging to the increase and the perfecting of all right Christian attainment. Mark, especially, his prayer for the Philippians, that "your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment ; that ye may approve the things that are excellent," or discriminate the things that differ. To another church he says, "Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good," (1 Thess. v. 21). Is it not his charge again, "Hold fast the form of sound words?" Nor is Paul different from Jude, from Peter, from John. "Contend earnestly for the faith," says the first ; "Ye have," says the second, "obeyed the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren." The author of the sermon may learn here how "to get at the something : " the love and the loyalty are from the Spirit, through "the truth." The Spirit, whose fruits all good spiritual affections are, is promised eminently to lead *into all truth*. And as to John, does he, the great preacher of love, make light of sound doctrine? of accurate theological views? he who exhorts to try the spirits, and who affirms that, "Whoever abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God," forbidding to receive the man who brings not the doctrine?

In fact, this vague praise of the certain something, as constituting, in separation from knowledge, the essence of religion, inverts the natural order of things. It is as violatory of philosophy as it is theologically unsound. With a show of liberality, it exacts in the feelings what can only rightly come through the intellectual perceptions. It is not the cause of faith alone, then, which these lax speculations imperil ; it is the cause of charity as well, the cause of that pure and undefiled religion which the text of this sermon commends. For the apostle James is in no wise teaching a different religion from Paul, or Peter, or John. It is in vain to say that here at least true religion is opposed to knowledge. To false knowledge, indeed, or to a dead faith ; but we must tell the author of the sermon, Your reasonings go to diminish one's sense of the preciousness of a true faith. Yet an Apostle calls it "precious ;" and James implies no independence of an intelli-

gent faith when he demands, 'Show me thy faith by thy works.'

We have yet to notice, before we close, one seeming plausible reason, but of no real force, pleaded here for exempting anxious inquirers from concerning themselves about "accurate" doctrinal notions. It is plausibly demanded, Must persons who are in urgent and immediate need of a hope in death, and a refuge from guilt and sin; must they wait the solution of metaphysical questions as to the extent and terms of a scheme of redemption? "The faith of the penitent," he says, "does not depend on a theological harmonising of the abstract attributes of justice and mercy, or the piecing and dove-tailing together of an ingenious scheme of salvation." So, the preacher puts questions of such high concern as every one conversant with our received creeds will at once see he here refers to in the category of metaphysical questions; and we, of course, understand him as including these when he alleges that after the controversies of eighteen hundred years theologians are scarcely agreed on one doctrine of Scripture. Is it really so, then? Are we to tell men that to be at all anxious about the concern that divine justice has in the provided atonement is a needless perplexing themselves with matters of scholastic strife? Are we to ridicule as dove tailing and piecing processes the gathering together of inspired testimonies as to the true and satisfying grounds of an immortal being's confidence before his God? The preacher hardly conceals here his sympathy with a school of which some one has said not unjustly, its motto might be "Redemption made easy." But we doubt if this light and sportive vein in which he indulges near ground where angels fear to tread will not be found to increase the perplexities of the awakened spirit instead of soothing it! We must deny his assertion that theologians have to any such extent interfered on the foundation of a sinner's hope as to justify him in recommending to the penitent the remitting of those nice adjustments of mercy and truth to the category of metaphysical questions. And though some will, no doubt,

accept the flattering unction, we feel assured that conscience in many others will anxiously turn to the very questions here put in abeyance; and, in proportion as it is discriminating and faithful, will seek a securer footing than is afforded for its quiet in these ready-to-hand ventures on Divine clemency. Does not our Saviour himself speak of a prompt faith and joy that have no root? And how evidently does our preacher in the salve he provides forget that if theologians do differ on questions of doctrine, they have no less differed on the feelings and the emotions—on the very love and loyalty to Christ which is here elevated as the essence of religion, in the absence of any distinct intellectual views! Surely, if the love and loyalty are so independent of an intellectual root, they at least must observe some rule. If they are not to evaporate in mere sentimental sighs, there must be some test of them—some practical direction given to the good desire; and assuredly there is no lack of advisers, and no end of differences and of metaphysical questions on the manner in which pious affection is to be demonstrated. The mystic has his way of it—the Romish priest his—and nothing is plainer to us than that this indolent, let-alone scheme of relief to the burdened spirit is the straight road to superstitious credulity. This exemption from careful study of divine truth will prepare for facile acceptance of human inventions and lies. It has been so—it will always be so. Metaphysical speculations! where are they seen in more prolific growth? where more unsettling to the very foundations of morality than among the sects of past centuries, who most repudiated doctrine and sought to get at something essential to religion instead of it? Into what labyrinths of perplexity got the brethren and sisters of the Free Spirit! What endless questionings have been agitated by the priesthood as to “venial and deadly sin,” and “intention,” and “perfection,” and “supererogation,” What evasions of the divine law, what confusion of vice and virtue in the code of the Jesuits! Truly, if the dying penitent may plead off from earnest inquiries as to a sure faith, because divines have wrangled as

to the doctrines, he may plead off from practical obedience too, so various are the standards of ethics, and so conflicting the decisions of casuists. We can see how the "Broad school" theory necessitates at last man's facile dependence on blind guides, in proportion as it relieves him of care in consulting the divine oracles, or listening to those who most deliberately have weighed their import. We should not wonder if Newman's latest work, "*The Grammar of Assent*," will take the fancy of many a reader of this discourse. The assumption of the Roman Catholic dogma of "the Church" is no doubt one remarkably brief way of settling doctrinal difficulties; and the Edinburgh reviewer justly says, that "an assent that does not recoil from the proposition,—I believe what the Church proposes to be believed, cannot need to be taught how to broaden and enlarge its area of belief."*

* An illustration of the maxim, "*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*," occurs in a recent work by a member of a Noble family, high in the estimation of Britons, and dear to the lovers of constitutional liberty.

While we can sympathise with many of Earl Russell's denunciations of the Scholastics of the middle ages—perhaps also of the damnatory clauses of the so called Athanasian creed,—he appears to have anything but candidly stated the grounds on which the assertion of the Son being consubstantial with the Father rests. He assumes that the words "My Father is greater than I" constitute the sum of what Christ Himself teaches on this topic. He does not trouble himself to harmonize this with other passages incapable of being reconciled to the Arian hypothesis.

Of the great Reformation doctrine of justification by faith, he gives but a meagre account: misrepresenting, we think, both Luther and Calvin; but that is a small matter compared with his defective representation of our Lord's and His apostles' teaching. His avowed sympathies with the Broad school and with the comprehensive theory of church fellowship, implied in the Bennett and other recent judgments, are likely to do the less harm that he has also avowed on the primary question of Inspiration (verbal), opinions not likely to find favour with many in our British churches.

APPENDIX E.

LETTER ON PUBLIC PRAYER: DESIDERATA IN PRESBY- TERIAN SERVICES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE WEEKLY REVIEW, LONDON.

SIR,—I have often desired to gain the ear of those conducting the public prayers of the sanctuary, to a few suggestions which I would humbly offer with the view of rendering our Sabbath service more impressive and more profitable. Waiving the abstract question as between extempore prayer and a liturgy, I think the extempore method has inadequate justice done to it, by the exemplifications of this style of prayer in a large proportion of our congregations. Of course, extempore prayer, like extempore preaching, in the sense in which alone it can be advocated, does not mean—should not mean—absolutely unpremeditated addresses to the Deity. But it seems to me that in six cases, or even nine of every twelve, those prayers offered up in Nonconformist pulpits bear presumptive evidence of having scarcely been the subject of any forethought whatever. Hence mal-arrangement, omissions, repetitions, awkward, and often hesitating if not stammering expressions—the composition of the moment on subjects specially requiring decorum or dignity in the language employed.

My remarks would refer especially to omissions; and yet, if I desiderate more fulness and more minuteness, it is not that the writer of these remarks is any advocate for lengthy prayers. In fact, it is part of his complaint that often to undue length some things are prayed about—he had almost said preached

about—in the prayers, unnecessarily or tediously, which, being subducted or abbreviated, would leave room abundant for all he pleads for.

Prayers for the absent sick are perhaps, as a rule, not omitted; yet again and again I have regretted the omission, or at least the brief or too hurried manner of the mention; or, where two services are held, the subject entirely omitted at the one of these, perhaps the very service at which anxious relatives or friends could give presence. Besides that, in this world of sorrow, events are of hourly, not only daily occurrence, which should suggest at every diet, to him who would lead public devotions wisely, some clauses adapted to sorrowing or fearing hearts. Then, the sailor and the traveller—how often forgotten! Once in South Britain, once in North. I have found this part of intercessory supplication neglected, almost in sight of the masts of ships lying at port, and in a large church in which probably every second pew contained an anxious mother, sister, or friend of those far away on the sea, prepared, as well in respect of the spiritual safety as bodily of those dear to them, to join fervently in petitions suited to their burdened hearts. Again, at varying seasons of the year—say Spring, or say Autumn—why should not regard to the general good, and sympathy with the cares of the husbandman, prompt to prayers for the appointed weeks of sowing-time or harvest? It has sometimes also occurred to me how opportunities are missed of cherishing both the spirit of dependence and faith, by selecting appropriate readings, as well as by devout recognition in the song and prayer of the power and the goodness of the Almighty. It may be allowed, I think, that *generally* the fault may be charged on the public prayers usual among us, that too little space is given to the affairs and interests of common life. Admitting that these are the inferior interests, let them at least not be grudged the inferior place. Our Lord gives one of the six petitions—a sixth place, then—to those matters of care as to which a congregation assembled on the day of rest contains many anxiously looking to God, or in whose

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The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been members of the Church since the year 1800. The names are arranged in alphabetical order, and the year of their admission is given in parentheses. The names are as follows: (The text is very faint and difficult to read, but appears to be a list of names and dates.)

There are many names in this list, and the text is very faint. It appears to be a continuation of the list of names and dates.

I have just received the following information from the Church records: (The text is very faint and difficult to read, but appears to be a continuation of the list of names and dates.)

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The first of these is the *Principles of the Christian Religion*, which is a treatise on the nature and scope of the Christian faith. It is a work of great importance, and one which has been widely read and discussed. The second is the *Principles of the Christian Church*, which is a treatise on the organization and government of the Christian Church. It is also a work of great importance, and one which has been widely read and discussed.

The third is the *Principles of the Christian Ministry*, which is a treatise on the duties and responsibilities of the Christian minister. It is a work of great importance, and one which has been widely read and discussed. The fourth is the *Principles of the Christian Life*, which is a treatise on the duties and responsibilities of the Christian individual. It is also a work of great importance, and one which has been widely read and discussed.

The fifth is the *Principles of the Christian Society*, which is a treatise on the duties and responsibilities of the Christian community. It is a work of great importance, and one which has been widely read and discussed. The sixth is the *Principles of the Christian World*, which is a treatise on the duties and responsibilities of the Christian nation. It is also a work of great importance, and one which has been widely read and discussed.

The seventh is the *Principles of the Christian Age*, which is a treatise on the duties and responsibilities of the Christian era. It is a work of great importance, and one which has been widely read and discussed. The eighth is the *Principles of the Christian Future*, which is a treatise on the duties and responsibilities of the Christian world. It is also a work of great importance, and one which has been widely read and discussed.

The ninth is the *Principles of the Christian Present*, which is a treatise on the duties and responsibilities of the Christian world. It is a work of great importance, and one which has been widely read and discussed. The tenth is the *Principles of the Christian Past*, which is a treatise on the duties and responsibilities of the Christian world. It is also a work of great importance, and one which has been widely read and discussed.

The eleventh is the *Principles of the Christian Future*, which is a treatise on the duties and responsibilities of the Christian world. It is a work of great importance, and one which has been widely read and discussed.

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APPENDIX E

PASTORAL ADDRESS BY A COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 1890

DEAR BRETHREN, MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.—In our recent meeting as an Assembly of your representatives Ministers and Elders, the general subject of the state of religion in our Church was discussed, as, no doubt, our common consideration. While a large proportion of the time at such meetings is necessarily occupied with what may be called exclusively legal business,

deciding on legal questions, or taking order for the continuation of the Church, and the adapting of its provisions and discipline to the ascertained necessities, whether of the Home or Foreign field, we feel that all such business is but a means to the great end of the Church's institution and existence, that God may be glorified in the reception of His truth, and the experience and manifestation of its saving and sanctifying influence.

We have from time to time assigned committees to make reports, not officially or objectively, yet impartially, as to the state of personal and family religion; and it has been ordered, by our annual General Assembly, by Presbyteries, or synods, or by our General Assembly, such committees to make some appropriate report to estimate the progress of the work of God throughout our borders. These reports, brought up at our annual meetings, have so far refreshed our spirits, and comforted

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There is no one confidently appeal who each morning and
 evening bow at God's footstool with your children and
 friends, in the divine blessing and committing you.

say, that without the constant appliances of religious training at home, and especially an authoritative as well as affectionate requirement of attendance on the exercises of daily devotion, you cannot expect to witness the development of Christian principle in those around you, or see your houses blessed with the lovely fruits of godliness? That religion is a thing between God and the conscience of each individual, is an irrelevant truism, quite abused when social duty is, under cover of this pretence, merged in personal. Does not every argument or reason by which secret prayer can be enforced point alike to the reasonableness of social prayer? And though we had no more in Scripture than the general inculcation of "all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," which an inspired apostle has bidden us watch unto, in close connection with his mention of the Christian armour (see Eph. vi.) ; does not this clearly imply that in our various capacities and relations we are to welcome, yea, watch for, every natural opportunity for or call to prayer ; and, most plainly and primarily, that those dwelling together under one roof, and owning one family government, should recognise as included in the "all prayer," thus enjoined, a united acknowledgment of the God of the families of the whole earth? Surely, if any duty incumbent at all times has its special seasons and opportunities, which reason is to recognise, what so natural and befitting as that those whom the shades of evening daily gather around the one hearth, or the returning sun again disperses from the same home to their various spheres of industry or scenes of danger and temptation, should, by the morning and evening sacrifice to the Author of all their blessings, recognise their common wants and enjoyments, and hallow their mutual affections and sympathies ! If, in exceptional cases, both seasons cannot be embraced, it is surely scarcely possible for a man of devout feelings to omit both. Does not nature itself dictate the offering? Will not the affection of each juvenile dweller under your roof respond to your calls to send up united homage to God? Will not the consciences of

your dependants, where not scared and debased, secretly reproach you for the neglect of so obvious an obligation !

Have not the approved *examples* of family religion recorded in Scripture all the force of precepts ? We find Abraham commended by God as one who would command his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord. We find his children and domestics included with him in the one covenant of circumcision. We find Isaac and Jacob erecting their altar as constantly as their tents, and calling on their families to put away strange gods. We find Job solicitously sanctifying his house, or seeking by prayer and sacrifice to hallow the festal intercourse of his children. And do we not find even the holy man Eli reproved, because with misguided affection he looked on, too indulgent of the youthful folly of his sons ! And hear men inspired of God giving expression to the voice of natural conscience, and announcing the mind of the Lord Himself—one in his resolution to walk with a perfect heart in his house at home ; another invoking judgment in these solemn words ; “ Pour out thy fury on the families that call not on thy name.” Finally, in the New Testament, besides the familiar and precious words of the blessed Saviour addressed to adults, implying the duty of prayer with as well as for children,—“ Suffer little children to come unto me,”—we have the positive apostolic precept, “ Parents bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ;” and in the history of the primitive Church, the words, “ Thou shalt be saved and thy house ;” and again, “ He was baptized, and he rejoiced in God with all his house :” This familiar phraseology obviously proceeding on the implication of an identity of sacred interests, and a community of sacred obligations as between heads and members of households.

Though we may specially urge the one duty we have insisted on, it is not that family worship is the whole of family religion ; and you will, dear brethren, understand us as expressing our concern that in all the families of our congregations the work

of instruction should go hand in hand with prayer; or, in general, that the ordering of your domestic arrangements, and the government of your households, should be as becomes families professing godliness. The very Scriptures we have just cited look further than to the acknowledgment of God by acts of social devotion. Nor can we conceive of family worship being attended to, without the duty being also recognised, of taking account of the religious knowledge of your children and domestics, either directly yourselves teaching and catechising them, or, when this may be devolved on others, still interesting yourselves in their spiritual progress. Indeed, we cannot easily admit that in any case you may rightly leave your children, or others depending on you as the head of a household, altogether to second parties for their instruction in the truth. Parents are directly addressed, both in Old Testament and New, in the precepts to train up children in the way they should go, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Surely then it were well to regard the labours, whether of teachers of Sabbath schools, or of pastors in their Bible classes, as but auxiliary to your own direct efforts to mould with scriptural knowledge the character of your children and dependants. Your responsibility cannot be fully discharged by your handing over interests so precious to the care of others. And as parents are directly charged with the responsibility, so the very commands addressed to the young to give heed to the counsels of a father, and to beware of despising the law of a mother, suppose that advantage is to be taken, by parents, of the influence, which the most endearing of natural ties gives, for dropping with effect into the youthful mind the seeds of heavenly truth. The experience of men in after life has proved how important it is that their religious principles should have all the advantage, for their strength and permanency, of those tender and cherished associations which gather round the early home. These memories cling to us wherever we go; and what protection against the seductions of the world has been

often found by him who, like Joseph, had been far separated from his brethren, in the remembrance of the instructions that came directly from the lips of a painstaking father, or the blessings invoked on his head by an anxious and prayerful mother!

But we plead with parents and heads of families by immediate as well as remoter benefits; by what is generally sure to be experienced while families are yet together, as well as when they are broken up. We plead with you by the consideration of the comfort to yourselves, resulting from such a direct spiritual oversight, as well as the benefit to your children and domestics; nay, and the benefit to society. Every day brings familiar proofs that good order and subordination, that reverence for parental authority, that willing obedience by children and servants, that affection and duty among these to each other; that, beyond the home circle also, a disposedness to all fidelity in the relative positions of social life, whether in the Church or in the Commonwealth; that these are most found, if not only found, where the obligations of a godly upbringing are fulfilled. We have pleasure in confirming what we thus say by the sentiments of men who have gone before us, and whose names are precious in the remembrance of the Church. We would refer to the "Epistle to the reader," by the godly Manton, accompanying the Confession of Faith, and in which he is dealing with heads of families in his own day. "Wherever thou goest," he says, "thou wilt hear many crying out of bad children and bad servants, whereas, indeed, the source of the mischief must be sought a little higher; it is bad parents and bad masters that make bad children and bad servants; and we cannot so much blame their untowardness, as our own neglect in their education. The devil hath great spite at the Kingdom of Christ, and he knoweth no such compendious way to crush it in the egg as the perverting of youth, and the supplanting of family duties. He striketh at all duties, those which are public in the assemblies of the saints; but these are

too well guarded by the solemn injunctions and dying charge of Jesus Christ, as that he should ever hope totally to subvert and undermine them. But at family duties he striketh with success, because the institution is not so solemn, and the omission is not so liable to public censure."

Another of our pious and learned ancestors is quoted by the distinguished author of that dedicatory Epistle, as thus bewailing corruptions in the church of God: "A principal cause of these mischiefs is the great and common neglect of governors of families in the discharge of the duty which they owe to God for the souls that are under their charge, especially in teaching them the doctrines of Christianity. Families are societies that must be sanctified to God as well as churches; and the governors of them have as truly a charge of the souls that are therein as the pastors have of the churches; but, alas, how little is this considered or regarded! Doubtless, many an excellent magistrate has been sent into the community, and many an excellent pastor into the church, and many a precious saint into heaven, through the happy preparations of a holy education, perhaps by a woman that thought herself an insignificant member of society. Would parents but begin betimes, and labour to affect the hearts of their children with the great matters of everlasting life, and to acquaint them with the substance of the doctrine of Christ, and, when they find in them the knowledge and love of Christ, would bring them to the pastors of the Church, to be tried, confirmed, and admitted to further privileges, what happy, well-ordered churches might we have! It is for want of laying this foundation well at first, that, when becoming parents themselves, they are so ignorant as most are, and that so many, especially of the younger sort, swallow down almost any error that is offered them, and are ready to follow any sort of dividers that will entice them, so that it be but done with earnestness and plausibility."

These words, written two centuries ago, scarcely suit less our own times. We might close our address with them, but that

we would fain strengthen our remonstrances with those of our members or adherents who more require these suggestions, by meeting with all affectionate consideration the plea put forward, not alone by carelessness, but by a seeming modest diffidence. Some, we know, allege their inability to communicate religious instruction, or to lead their households in prayer. They feel that, having so much need themselves to *learn*, it is presumptuous in them to *teach*. We must remind you, dear brethren, that for the soul to be without knowledge is not good. An apostle, while charging that some in the early Church had not the knowledge of God, reproves this ignorance: "I speak this to your shame." And surely, ignorance of Christianity is specially to our shame in these days; for no age has enjoyed more help, whether for the work of instructing others, or of curing our own ignorance. But, that you may not be qualified to teach the deep things of God, is no reason why the young may not receive at your lips the first principles of the oracles of God,—may not be made familiar, as we doubt not you yourselves would scorn to be thought not to be, with the story of Eden, and the story of the Cross;—with the lessons of inspired wisdom embodied in the proverbs of a Solomon, and the precious sayings of a greater than Solomon. Who of you is unable to read with your families the simple *word*? How few have not access to the commentaries of men whose labours have been devoted to the interpretation of Scripture, and the condensing and arranging of its precious contents for the use of persons of all ages and capacities! Nor should we omit to take this opportunity of specially commending to the use of families those very forms of sound words which the Epistle just quoted was designed to introduce favourably to the reader: we mean the Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, both Larger and Shorter. Nowhere, perhaps, will you find so much of divine truth set forth in so well weighed human language, while at every point you are referred to the very words of

spiration, as the ultimate rule of Faith. We fear that the reading of them is too much neglected, both by old and young, among the members of our churches. Earnestly do we desire that no family should be without a copy of these, our acknowledged subordinate standards; and, in particular, that, on occasion of application being made for admission to sealing ordinances, recourse were had to such helps to an intelligent and profitable observance of either sacrament.

By like considerations would we meet the plea of inability to lead in family prayer. In the earlier part of our address we supposed the case of some families finding a difficulty or impossibility in assembling for worship twice a day; and as we said on this question of time and frequency, that, once assembling can scarcely but in rare exceptional cases indeed be supposed impracticable, or the entire omission be easily reconciled with the existence of serious religion in the breast at all; so, on the question of talent or ability, we feel as if the supposition were monstrous that a head of a house should plead incompetency to bow the knee along with his loved ones, and, even in words of his own, to utter the confession of sin, or the prayer for mercy, to the God of families. But to say that he cannot find expressions appropriate in which to clothe the sentiments of anxious dependence, of humble penitence, of filial trust before his Father in heaven,—to say this while in the most familiar portions of God's own word, in every simple, brief, and easily remembered form, is provided to hand the confession, and the thanksgiving, and the petition that suits every possible case in human experience, may well bring into question the sincerity of the man who advances such a preposterous excuse. Have you not at hand the best of prayers—brief but comprehensive, which the child may learn, but which no grown man is too old to profit by? Let the parent utter at least *this* reverently at the domestic altar, if he utters no more, before he shall claim that his excuse of incapability is

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to be accepted. But have you not the great and precious promises? Can you not hold up these to the Promiser, and plead with Him, and put Him in remembrance? Ah, do you believe in a heaven to gain or lose, and in a "wrath to come;" and can you find no words in which to deprecate the danger, and invoke the grace, for your own offspring, and with them? Do you lack words in which to call in the physician's presence, or describe the malady when sickness invades your dwelling? Do words fail you when you solicit friendly patronage for those who can further your child's way in this world, or when you appeal to the arbiter whom you expect to vindicate your own or your family's rights, or when you instruct the advocate who is to plead for them? Is it only where the soul is concerned that diffidence seals your lips? Is it only eternal things that you are ashamed to speak of before your children, or to plead for in presence of her who travailed in bearing them? Do not, dear brethren, say you cannot pray. May it not rather be you will not? Why, the very wicked find words in which to cry to God at last; whether heard, we say not. From the very babe and suckling, God ordains praise. Truly, this excuse will not be sustained by yourselves in those moments that come to many a family, when death shall seize with his cold grasp them you most love; when you shall behold the countenance change, and the eye, it may be, in its latest glance, speak to you its reminiscence of opportunities neglected; and conscience as well as affection will force the question—What did you do to save that soul from the second death, or to train it for immortality? But, in short, if it be that the real thing wanting is a willingness to confess Christ, oh, let the Saviour's warning be meditated on: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, or of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed; and whoso confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father and before His angels."

Only a brief word more: it is to younger persons we would address it; to you who dwell under religious roofs, and who

appreciate the privilege of godly upbringing; also to you who—must we suppose it!—grudge obedience to a parent's or to a master's counsels. Let the first feel their obligation to strengthen the hands of those who care solicitously for their best interests. Let them love and honour them as the Lord hath commanded. Let them copy into their own practice what has been according to God in their example. Let them feel their responsibility to repay with all duty a debt the most sacred—repay it by their discreetness, their respectful subjection, their readiness to oblige parents and superiors. Let them beware of ingratitude, of pride, of airs of a false independence, of impatience with the infirmities of the aged. Selfreliance is to be commended, but not when separated from deference to the counsels of experience, and reverence for authority. Do not mistake for a spirit of independence selfishness and ignorant rudeness. Let the prayers of parents and masters have the return of your reciprocal prayers for *them*; and co-operate as you have opportunity with their solicitous care for others beside you, your brothers, your sisters, your fellow-servants.

Let each know that he is his "brother's keeper." Labour to induce in the minds of those more recalcitrant of family government, sobriety of spirit, regular attendance on household worship, respect for the sacred day, a just appreciation of the yoke of Christ as not burdensome, but easy, and of godliness as "profitable for all things." And would that we could effectually convince of their mistake those of you who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; who are yet seeking in the husks of vain sensual delights a satisfaction which is only to be found when they return to their heavenly Father's house! Would we could convince those who account the restraints of parental authority irksome, or who murmur at the claims on their time required by attention to domestic worship or instruction, what injustice to themselves they are guilty of; what sin in God's sight! Consider what advantages even for this life you forfeit by contempt of the discipline which will best pre-

pare you for a wise discharge of all relative duties, and best ensure to you the confidence of your fellow men.

Let us leave with you the brief, expressive aphorism, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" and the command, with the accompanying promise of the Lord and Maker of us all, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all (other) things shall be added unto you."

In name and by appointment of the General Assembly.

M. WILLIS, *Moderator*.

Attest

1854